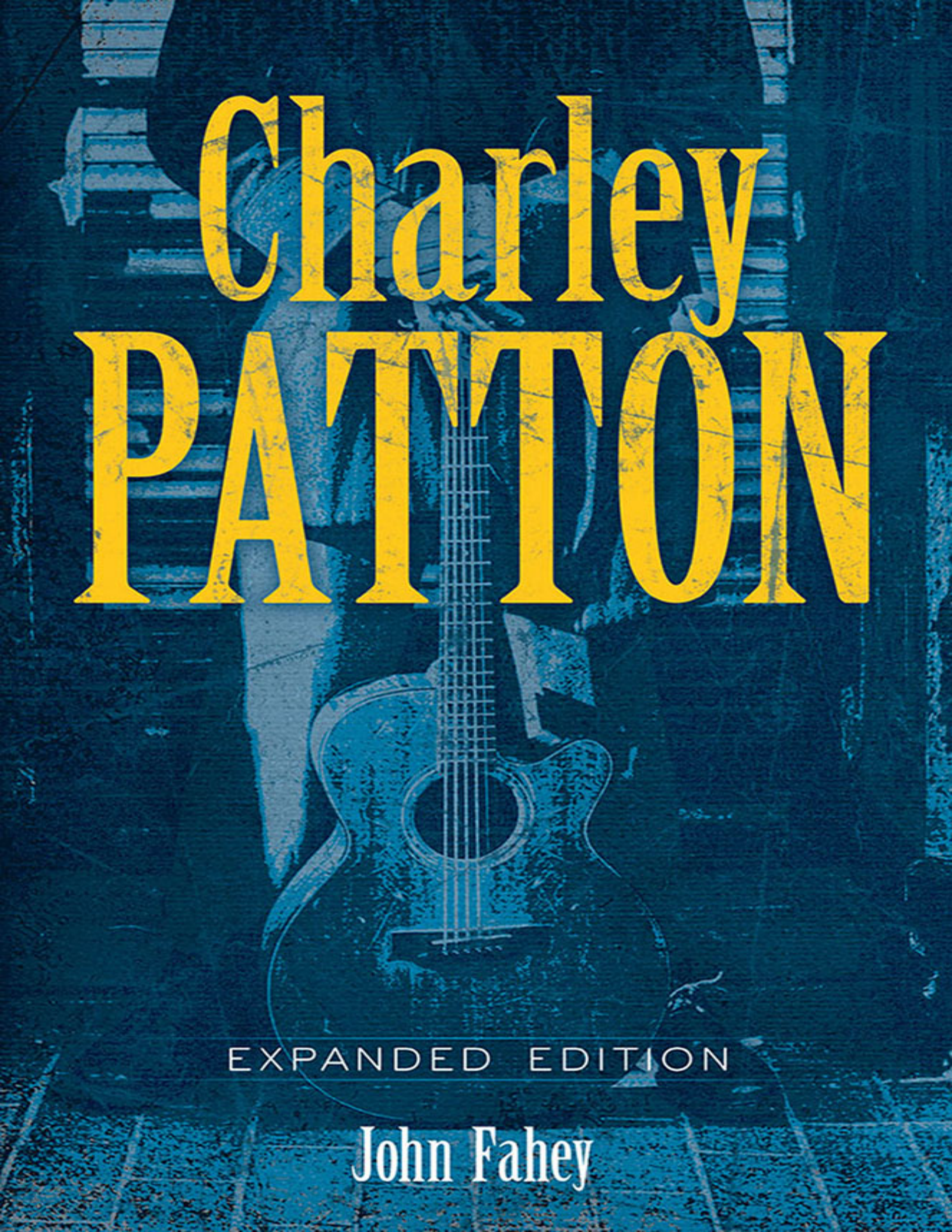
Charley
PATTON
EXPANDED EDITION
John Fahey

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JOHN FAHEY

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INTRODUCTION

Geologically speaking, the Yazoo River Basin region of northeastern Mississippi lies on both sides of the Yazoo and Tallahatchie Rivers. It is roughly triangular with its apex at Marked Tree, Arkansas. A straight line drawn from there to Durant, Mississippi, forms its eastern border. A straight line drawn from Durant to Vicksburg, Mississippi, forms its southern border. On the west it is bounded by the hills which parallel the Mississippi River on the Arkansas side, from Vicksburg to Marked Tree, Arkansas. The local name for the region is 'the Delta' or the 'Mississippi Delta', which should not be confused with the geologically accurate name of the Delta, applied to the terminus of the Mississippi River at the Gulf of Mexico. The Yazoo River Basin will be referred to, occasionally, as 'the Delta'.

Charley Patton is remembered throughout the Yazoo River Basin of Mississippi and eastern Arkansas as having been during his lifetime the most popular local guitar-playing songster and blues-singer of that region. A 'blues-singer' is simply one who sings blues. (Since an attempt to define blues forms an important part of this study, the term must remain undefined for the present.) There were many popular blues singers in the Delta, such as Eddie 'Son' House, who spent much of his early musical life with Patton and was greatly influenced by him; Ishmon Bracey (d. 1970), at first a singer of blues, then a preacher, who spent his entire life in Jackson, Mississippi, but knew Patton, and played with him on occasion when Patton came to Jackson; or Willie Brown, a friend of both House and Patton, with whom he sang and played, who died in about 1958, after spending most of his life in the Mississippi Delta. Patton is remembered as a 'songster' because, unlike his local competitors such as Son House, Ishmon Bracey, Willie Brown, Skip James and others, who knew few songs other than blues-songs and religious songs, Patton had a large repertoire of blues-ballads, ragtime pieces, and songs derived from either white popular or rural white traditions.

Blues-ballads are loose, shifting, and subjective narrative songs which celebrate and comment upon events rather than describe them in a straightforward, journalistic manner. Emotional reactions to events are indicated. Blues-ballads are lyrical and they make use of repetitions, clichés, commonplaces, contrasts, and refrains. They are usually collected from blacks rather than from whites, and many of them evolve through a long process of 'communal recreation' (using the term loosely) among black people. When collected from whites, black influence can usually be demonstrated. The term 'ragtime' will not be used to denote any songs which are of the classical form, apparently invented by Scott Joplin. For a discussion of this form see the chapter 'The Rise of Ragtime' in Gilbert Chase's book, *America's Music*. In this study, 'ragtime' will refer to songs which are textually composed of nonsense stanzas or stanzas referring humorously to sexual matters. Musically, they are characterised by a quick tempo, frequent chord changes in the guitar accompaniment, and melodies which are either chromatically constructed, or are gapped versions of the Ionian mode, containing frequent major sevenths, rather than minor sevenths.

Charley Patton has been dead for more than 30 years, yet his name is readily recalled by many Mississippi blacks and some whites. His musical influence, in one way or another, lives on to this day in the recordings and performances of such recently popular blues-singers as Howlin' Wolf (whom Patton taught to play the guitar), Lightnin' Hopkins (who is known to sing stanzas from *Banty Rooster Blues*, which he probably learned by listening to one of Patton's recordings of that song), John Lee Hooker (who knew Patton and also sings some of his stanzas), and others.

Between 14 June 1929, and 1 February 1934, Patton made at least 52 issued commercial recordings. Of these, all but six sides (three records) have been made available for analysis. [But see p. 107]. His recorded repertoire represents a very good sample of what southern black songsters and blues-singers were performing between 1915 and 1934, the period during which Patton was an active entertainer. There are blues, spirituals and other religious songs, blues-ballads, folksongs, and even a few songs probably of Tin Pan Alley origin.

These recordings stand as a valuable social document. If the only source material for black music that we had was the printed collections of Work, Allen, Ware, Garrison, and others, we should have but a small fraction of

the source material that is available to us. If, in addition, we had the testimony of people who remember Patton and singers like him, but ignored the possibilities inherent in analysing commercial recordings, we should be overlooking an extremely fruitful job of sampling, done inadvertently by commercial recording companies.

It is true that the folk-artist in a recording studio, isolated from the audience to which he is accustomed, is in an 'artificial' situation. The artist is told to make as few mistakes as possible, to watch for the red light on the wall since his performance can last no more than four minutes. He is told that he will be paid, but that he will be paid 'per accepted selections' only. For example, 'Mississippi' John Hurt, a songster from Carroll County, Mississippi, was told in a letter from T. G. Rockwell, Recording Director of the General Phonograph Company (OKeh), dated 8 November 1928: 'If it is possible for you to make arrangements to get away from Avalon for a week and come to New York for recording, we will pay you $20.00 per accepted selection and all your expenses to New York and return for this work.' All this increases the 'artificiality' of the situation.

This critique is especially applicable to most of those 'race' recordings of female singers accompanied by groups of jazz instrumentalists. And the majority of early race recordings (between 1923 and 1926) were of this nature. The term 'race record' was used by most of the major record companies to denote those records of black artists designed primarily for black consumption. It was not used for recordings of black artists such as the Fisk University Jubilee Singers, designed for the white market, because this group performed in European musical style almost totally devoid of indigenous black stylistic characteristics. Race records were generally sold only in stores in segregated black areas. A survey of three race record catalogues by Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson in 1926 revealed that 'among the blues singers who have gained a more or less national recognition there is scarcely a man's name to be found.' Odum and Johnson, realising that these recordings were to a great extent contrived and were not a good sampling of what they termed 'folk blues', referred to them rather as recordings of 'formal blues'. This distinction between 'folk' and 'formal blues' was perfectly valid for the year 1926. Had they performed a similar survey in 1929, they would have found that their distinction between the two kinds of blues was no longer very useful.

Newman I. White, writing on blues in 1928, believed that Odum and Johnson and others − including W. C. Handy, John A. Lomax, Darius Milhaud, Carl Van Vechten and the writers of two articles in semi-scholarly periodicals – had 'pretty well exhausted the subject'. He further noted that 'the value of the blues as an expression of the folk-Negro's mind is somewhat impaired by the fact that the folk blues and the factory product are to-day almost inextricably mixed. Most blues sung by Negroes to-day have only a secondary folk origin; their primary source is the phonograph record.'

By 1929, everyone considered the subject of blues, and especially commercially issued blues, 'pretty well exhausted'. Let us examine for a moment 'the factory product' which White and Odum and Johnson have discussed. Much of what these scholars have said is true. When groups record, the members must decide in advance the exact metrical structure of the performance, or else musical chaos will ensue. As a result, most of the early blues recordings held rigidly to a predetermined structure, the 16- or 32-bar form which prevailed in the Tin Pan Alley songs of the day. The 12-bar stanza, known as the 'blues stanza' was also frequently used; sometimes a single song combined 12-bar and 16- or 32-bar forms. There were no metrical irregularities.

Furthermore, in group recordings it must be decided in advance which pitches each member is going to play or sing. The temporal duration of the pitches must to a great extent be predetermined, and it must be decided in advance at what place in the predetermined structure each member of the group is going to sing or play these pitches. Each member must know in advance what every other member is going to do and when he is going to do it. The verses which are to be sung must also be predetermined. The group must further get the advance approval of the recording director. He may make suggestions to the group, which in turn influence the performance. This process is documented in Samuel B. Charters' book, *The Country Blues*.

The first 'blues' record (OKeh 4113: Mamie Smith's *That Thing Called Love* and *You Can't Keep a Good Man Down*, recorded 14 February 1920), was performed by a 'contralto' accompanied by the 'Rega Orchestra'. The songs were both *composed* by Perry Bradford, whom Charters refers to as 'the shrewdest and most determined of the colored blues writers.'

The performances were both rigidly predetermined. The same is true of most of Mamie Smith's recordings (she continued to record until 1931), of Bessie Smith's recordings (she recorded from 1923 until 1933), and of all the blues-singers who recorded commercially with groups. In many cases company men, or their friends, wrote the texts and the music of the songs to be recorded and taught them to the recording personnel.

It is recordings of this nature that Newman White and Odum and Johnson discuss. Certain types of black music, such as ring-shouts, field hollers, and street cries, were, of course, not represented in the catalogues which they consulted. The record companies perhaps felt that recordings of these, presumably older, forms of black music had no market value. Nevertheless, if these authors had gone to their local race record stores in 1929 and had listened to some of the recently issued race records, they would have discovered a new phenomenon: recordings of individual singers accompanying themselves with only guitars or banjo-guitars. They would have heard many traditional (as well as non-traditional) blues-verses that are not contained in their printed collections, nor in any others. They would have discovered recordings of traditional spirituals, blues-ballads, and folksongs of which they were totally unaware. And they would have been able to collect further traditional stanzas of songs which they knew already existed. Many of these songs and verses had never been issued on any previous record and thus could not have been learned by the recording artists from previous factory products.

The first recordings of individual black performers such as 'Papa' Charlie Jackson and Blind Blake were less predetermined than were group recordings. Jackson played a six-stringed banjo and recorded primarily ragtime songs for Paramount, OKeh, and the American Record Company. Between August 1924 and April 1935, approximately 40 of his records were issued. After 1926 he occasionally accompanied himself with a guitar and attempted to sing blues-songs, but recordings of these sold poorly. He is usually credited with being the first black singer to record with only a stringed instrument as accompaniment. Bessie Brown preceded him, however, by one month with her *Hoodoo Blues* (Columbia 14029-D, recorded 3 July 1924). She was accompanied by Roy Smeck's guitar (not banjo as in Dixon and Godrich). Jackson was reported to be from New Orleans. His second record, Paramount 12336, *Salt Lake City Blues* and *Salty Dog Blues* sold enormously well.

Statements as to the relative number of record sales are made on the basis of the author's experience collecting race records in the Southern states by canvassing black homes. If, for example, I have found some 20 or 30 copies of 'Papa' Charlie Jackson's *Salt Lake City Blues* backed by *Salty Dog Blues* on Paramount 12236, and only one copy of *I Believe I'll Go Back Home* backed by *Trust in God And Do The Right*, by Blind Willie Davis on Paramount 12979 (which is actually the case), I assume that the former record sold quite well, the latter poorly.

Blind Blake (real name, Arthur Blake) recorded about 80 sides for Paramount between September 1926 and June 1932. His recordings are characterised by:

(1) excellent, perhaps unequalled, ragtime guitar work. This style of guitar playing involves: (a) use of the thumb alternating between different bass strings which provides the rhythm – not necessarily syncopated; (b) the use of the second, sometimes also the third finger, to play the top three strings on which the tunes and/or 'riffs' are played; (c) the use of at least three chords, the major I, IV and V chord, frequently in the key of C in standard tuning. The older songsters such as John Hurt use this style. What Blake added to it was a great amount of syncopation, created by 'choking' the strings, i.e., damping the sound on the up-beat after sounding the string (or strings) with either hand. His guitar playing was so proficient that he accompanied jazz entertainers such as Johnny Dodds, Jimmy Bertrand and others.

(2) texts similar to those of the earlier female blues-singers.

The same is true of Lonnie Johnson, whose guitar style was different in that he used a flat pick and was more classically oriented. Blake's (and Johnson's) texts usually describe either an unfortunate love affair or humorous sexual matters. Thus neither Blake nor Johnson can be considered a songster since their texts are never of folksongs or songs of popular origin. Yet Johnson's guitar style is undoubtedly an offshoot of the songster tradition.

These artists sang folksongs and blues in which there were occasional metrical irregularities. To some extent, the texts were probably still predetermined. But with the first recording of Blind Lemon Jefferson, the great blues-singer from Wortham, Texas (Paramount 12354: *Got The Blues* and *Long Lonesome Blues*, recorded in March 1926), a new phase of the recording industry began. This record sold enormously well and there began

a rush to record other singers like him. Metrical irregularities are the rule rather than the exception on Blind Lemon's records; it is impossible to anticipate the number of measures (as well as the length of each measure) in each verse. It is doubtful that the recording company offered Lemon any assistance in the composition of his texts. While it is impossible to tell to what extent the texts were predetermined by Lemon himself, it seems probable that the 'artificiality' of the commercial recording session did little to influence the text and the music beyond limiting their temporal duration. The vast majority of Lemon's verses do not exist in any printed collection.

It became commercially profitable to allow the individual performer as much freedom as possible at recording sessions, and the controlling factors which were necessary in group recordings were kept to a minimum. Depth studies and research can in many cases determine where such controlling factors were exercised. For example, it seems likely that on two issued sides (Paramount 12493, *Hot Dogs*, and Paramount 12578, *One Dime Blues*) by Lemon, company pressure was exerted to change his guitar style to approximate more closely to that of Blind Blake. This seems likely, for these two performances are the only recordings in that style among over 90 issued sides. All the others which the author has heard (about 80 per cent of the total) are in a different style, presumably Lemon's own. Son House, who recorded for Paramount in 1930, has said that the recording engineer exercised no controls and made no suggestions whatsoever to him, to Charley Patton, to Louise Johnson, or to Willie Brown, all of whom recorded while House was present. On one occasion, however, after House's session was over (during which time nothing he chose to record was rejected) the company man asked him to come back the next day with a song which sounded like one of Blind Lemon Jefferson's. (Jefferson was dead and the company was looking for a new best-seller.) House stayed up all night and composed his *Mississippi County Farm Blues* issued on Paramount 13096, which he thought sounded like one of Blind Lemon's songs. Apart from the fact that the tune is one of Lemon's (Paramount 12585: *See That My Grave's Kept Clean*), there is little similarity of sound. But the company man was pleased.

Skip James, who recorded for the same company in 1931, has said that the recording director, Arthur Laibley (the man who first recorded Blind Lemon and apparently recorded all of the other Paramount country-blues artists mentioned in this book, including Charley Patton), let him perform

whatever he wanted and in whatever manner he chose, except in two cases. James attempted to record a song which he had learned from another Paramount record, the *Forty-Four Blues* by James Wiggins, Paramount 12860. Laibley suggested that James do a song about a gun with a different size calibre, and so James recorded his *22-20 Blues*. When Laibley requested that James make up a song about the depression, the singer recorded his *Hard Time Killin' Floor Blues*.

Rube Lacy, another Paramount artist, told the author that Laibley exercised the same non-directive policy with him. But Lacy also said that Laibley told him to play 'blues'. Any new blues-song would do. Laibley probably told the other recording artists mentioned to do the same thing.

Before jumping to the conclusion that Laibley's injunction to play the blues resulted in a disproportionate amount of blues being recorded, we should try to understand what Laibley meant by this term and what his artists understood by it. Three of Son House's sides do not have the term 'blues' in their titles (Paramount 13042: *My Black Mama – Parts I and 2*; Paramount 13096: *Clarksdale Moan*). The texts of these sides do not tell a coherent story and are composed chiefly of verses describing the singer's feelings about male-female relationships. This type of song is, of course, frequently called 'blues'. *Dry Spell Blues*, in two parts, describes the reaction of House to a drought; *Mississippi County Farm Blues* describes his reaction to imprisonment. Only one side, which describes House's reaction to an unfortunate relationship with a woman, is entitled 'blues', on Paramount 13111, *What Any I To Do Blues*. Six of Skip James' issued sides describe a reaction to an unfortunate love affair, of which four have 'blues' in the title.

Perhaps the occurrence of 'blues' in the title of a song does not necessarily indicate that the singers or recording engineer thought that only songs which describe a personal reaction to an unfortunate love situation are 'blues'. Charley Patton recorded seven sides which contain at least one stanza, usually two or three, on the subject, and yet none of the titles of these seven sides contains the word 'blues': *It Won't Be Long*, *When Your Way Gets Dark*, *Heart Like Railroad Steel*, *Moon Going Down*, *Bird Nest Bound*, *Love My Stuff* and *Poor Me*. He recorded five sides which tell a story (or attempt to tell a story) about external events. *Tom Rushen Blues*, for example, contains no reference to women. *Dry Well Blues* describes what the citizens of Lula, Mississippi, did during a drought. *Running Wild*

Blues seems to be a country hoedown or square-dance song; *A Spoonful Blues* is a ragtime song. Its text does mention women, but only in terms of amusing sexual allusions. *Elder Greene Blues* does not refer to an unfortunate love affair. The writer does not know what Laibley might have meant by 'blues', nor what Patton, House and James thought he meant. What Laibley in fact obtained was a large assortment of at least four or five different types of songs which had little in common. All types were occasionally entitled 'blues', except of course, religious songs.

Different 'takes' (i.e., more than one recording of the same song) were frequently made, but according to both James and House, only when a very bad mistake was made and they, the artists, were dissatisfied with the first performance. The recording engineer would play them back each take and ask them if *they* thought it satisfactory.

The Paramount Company (and also the Vocalion and Victor Companies) thus exercised a non-directive policy toward their individual artists. This was probably because the company engineers had little understanding of what such 'primitives' as Patton, House, and James were doing. They could offer few meaningful or constructive suggestions, but hoped, on the basis of past sales of non-directed recordings, for more sales of records to those people (Yazoo Basin blacks, for example) who did understand what was being performed. Furthermore, it was becoming evident to the companies that it was impossible to predict what kind of a performance would sell. So the companies allowed their artists a great deal of freedom in the hope that the artists themselves would know what would sell.

Virtually anyone who could make any kind of musical sound could make at least one audition record for Paramount, Vocalion, or Victor. These companies had, and still retain, the reputation of recording, paying for, and issuing records of practically anyone who walked into their studios for an audition and of letting such people perform whatever they chose. Charters says, 'They (Victor) would make a test of anybody who wandered in, no matter what kind of music he played or how drunk he was. If they thought he could get through three minutes of anything musical, they made a test. If somebody happened to think about it he was paid ten dollars for his time.'

Charters writes that the Paramount Company also had 'a policy of . . . taking a chance on almost anything . . .' This policy 'preserved early musical styles that might have been lost . . . Almost every style of Southern singing was represented in their blues lists. . . .'

By 1931, the companies had been performing for three or four years the function of passively allowing hundreds of southern blacks to sit in their studios and record the songs which they had been singing for decades. The 'subject' of blues, as well as of other forms of Afro-American music, had scarcely been 'exhausted' by Odum and Johnson, nor by anyone else. The surface had hardly been scratched. But almost everyone, with the exception of John and Alan Lomax (see the bibliography for a list of their numerous publications), thought that no further investigation into black music was necessary. Scholars of folk music sat (and still sit) in their offices thinking that no more was to be found out about black music. Or, perhaps, they were simply not interested. In any case, scholars did little field collecting.

This condition prevailed until the late 1950s, when non-academic record collectors, such as the author, began to take an interest in the old 'factory products' for purely æsthetic purposes. In the interim, between 1928 (the publication date of Newman White's book) and the sixties, little attention has been directed toward race records as a possible source of folk music. As a result of this interest in such 'factory products' much field work was initiated, in most cases by record collectors, in a few by scholars such as D. K. Wilgus.

The neophyte folklorist is typically directed to printed collections if he wishes to learn about black music in the United States of America. The time has come to point out two things: first, printed collections are not the only place in which one may find early examples of black song. In fact, what one usually finds is the text only, along with ludicrous but picturesque comments about the southern 'darky'. Secondly, the type of material which was *purchased* during non-directive recording sessions by commercial companies may not have been entirely different from the kind of material which was *collected* (or could have been collected) by folklorists during the 1920s and printed in collections. The motivations for collecting and purchasing were, of course, different. But let us compare the two types of recording situations.

First of all, it is impossible without the assistance of hidden microphones, or some such equipment, to observe and record folklore in a completely 'natural' setting. The presence of the recording engineer automatically renders the situation contrived. But the presence of the folklorist also makes the situation 'unnatural'. Any criticism directed at the 'artificiality' of such a passive recording situation as the Paramount studios

offered might also be directed at recordings (on paper or record) made by folklorists. The great job of collecting done by Cecil Sharp was performed in a situation which was no less contrived than were the recordings made by companies at non-directive sessions. The two types of recording (by folklorist and passive studio) are very much the same. The only significant difference is that recordings made by passive companies had to be limited in length. But even so, when a performer could not get all of his song on one side of a record he was frequently given the option of extending his performance into a 'Part 2', or even '3' or '4', like *Jim Jackson's Kansas City Blues* in four parts on Vocalion 11144 and 1155. Also, of course, the performers were paid by the record companies; in most cases they were not paid by field-collectors.

There seems to be no reason for regarding passive sessions of individual artists recorded by companies as of any less value than sessions in the field recorded by folklorists. Furthermore, many folklorists, such as Odum and Johnson, recorded only the texts (or with very little of the music). Those, such as Sharp, who wrote down the music they heard were subject to error. If Cecil Sharp made mistakes, we shall never be able to know that he did so. But we can listen to commercial recordings. The text *and music* are there, and if we make transcriptions of the words or texts, these transcriptions can always be checked by playing the record. It is a sad commentary on American scholars of folkmusic that between 1927 and 1962 the commercial recording industry did an infinitely better job of collecting, preserving, and making available to the public native American folksongs – especially black folksongs.

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Practically all of the information presented here has been supplied by Mr Gayle Dean Wardlow of Meridian, Mississippi, Mr David Evans of Los Angeles, and Mr Bernard Klatzko of New York. However, a preliminary statement is necessary regarding the status of biographical research dealing with Patton.

In the first place, no one sought to unearth any of the facts of Patton's life until 1958, when the author first visited Clarksdale and Greenwood, Mississippi, although Patton had died 24 years earlier. No one recalled anything about Patton except that he was a great musician and songster, indeed the most popular blues-singer living in the Yazoo Basin during the last 20 years of his life. People remembered that he drank a lot and 'lived a rough life' (i.e. he was not very religious), and that his last record was *There Ain't No Grave Gonna Hold My Body Down*, which he recorded a few days before he was stabbed to death or poisoned by a jealous woman. The first two of these 'facts' which many Delta Negroes 'remember' appear to be true. The third is easily disproved and the fourth is only half true.

In the intervening 24 years between the time of his death and 1958, practically everything about Patton had been forgotten by those who knew him best. Even his last 'wife', Bertha Lee Pate (now Bertha Lee Joiner) today seems to remember little more than that he played the guitar.

There exists a great deal of confusion about the circumstances of Patton's birth, not only among those who knew him, but among those who claim to be related to him. The procedure used in order to determine the facts is for the most part the following.

The testimony of people who volunteer information on other matters, with which the author is already well acquainted (who made the best selling record of *Shake 'Em On Down*; where Skip James learned his songs; what James's real name was; who Henry Stuckey was, etc.), informants who readily admit that they know nothing about a certain subject, or that they have forgotten; such testimony is given more credence than that of

informants who attempt to gloss over their lack of knowledge. Consequently, much reliance is placed upon Sam Chatmon, since he has an excellent memory and seems to be entirely honest. Son House, while honest, does not possess a uniformly accurate memory, but readily admits when he is confused. Finally, I have derived information from numerous people who were acquainted with Patton at different stages during his life – people who were reliable on other matters – but people too numerous too mention.

Sam Chatmon, who provided much of the information on Charley Patton's early life and career, was a member of a large family of brothers, among them Bo, Lonnie, Harry, Sam and an adopted brother Walter Jacobs, otherwise called Walter Vincent. The Chatmon family was most prodigious in its recording career. Bo Chatmon, under the name 'Bo Carter', recorded more than a hundred sides for various companies. He was also a member of the Mississippi Sheiks, a group usually consisting of a vocalist with guitar and violin or guitar and piano accompaniment. The Sheiks made nearly as many records as Bo Chatmon did on his own, and most of them were very good sellers. They also recorded as the Chatman Brothers, the Mississippi Blacksnakes and the Mississippi Mud Steppers, and at one session accompanied Texas Alexander, who, in terms of record sales, was one of the top ten blues vocalists during the period before World War II. (Not much is known of him except that Sam 'Lightnin' Hopkins claims him as a 'cousin' on occasion.) Lonnie and Sam Chatmon were the 'Chatman Brothers' on Bluebird. Dixon and Godrich's report of this session is misleading; where there are two guitars, rather than violin and guitar, the second guitarist is Eugene Powell. Bo Chatmon acted as agent for Powell, who is still living in Greenville, Mississippi, and was once known as 'Sonny Boy Nelson'. It was under this pseudonym that his own Bluebird records were issued, though, curiously enough, Powell was until recently unaware of the fact.

Bo Carter (left), with Will Shade

Sam Chatmon

Sam Chatmon – who played guitar with the Sheiks – in retrospect regards Patton as a fairly good musician, when he was not clowning around, but feels that the Sheiks and Charlie McCoy were much more proficient, versatile and talented. The Chatman Brothers' recordings are characterised by group sessions, complex chords, more use of the major 4 and major 5 chords in the same song – in general, a more sophisticated sound than that of Patton and his musical generation.

The Sheiks, like Patton, played at parties for white people, and this for a while served as their main source of income. Lonnie both read and wrote music, having learned from another black musician, who in turn had learned from an Italian violin-maker. While Bo played the violin a little, Lonnie

always played it at parties and for recording sessions, since he was very much more proficient on the instrument than was Bo.

Chatmon's main criticism of Patton and the older generation was that they only knew how to play in the key of E and in 'Spanish' (open G). Many people have long suspected that the open G guitar tuning was derived from a very common open G banjo tuning. This may be the case ultimately, but Sam Chatmon never saw a banjo until he was in his thirties.

According to Sam 'there was an older style around than what me and Lonnie and Bo played. Now my father he played the fiddle – old songs like *Turkey in the Straw* and such. My older brothers and half-brothers, including Charley played mostly in E and 'Spanish' and that was all! Even a couple of my older sisters played the same way. Now I can't exactly do it, but I'll show you how Charley used to come around and twirl the guitar – you see, like this, and then play and make it come out right [sings and plays first verse of *Pony Blues*]. Then he had a way of tapping on the guitar too, the same time he played [demonstrates this] . . . and a lot of others too, like behind his neck [another demonstration].'

Charley Patton was the son of Henderson Chatmon (father of *the* Chatmons and a former slave) and Anney Patton (wife of Bill Patton) and was born near Edwards, probably in Bolton, Mississippi, in the late 1880s. Since Henderson Chatmon was born of a mixed union, and had very little black blood, Charley was evidently of primarily white and Indian descent. Charley had numerous brothers and half brothers by both Henderson and Anney Patton. According to Sam, morals were much relaxed in those days. His father had many 'outside women' and nobody seemed to mind. Charley spent about half his early life with the Chatmons; this explains some of the confusion surrounding these years.

Other people who knew Patton in and around his adolescent home on Dockery's Plantation give a different picture of Patton's family. His 'father', presumably Bill Patton, was apparently a part-time preacher. Patton then, had a second set of other, different relatives and siblings. His siblings by Henderson Chatmon were William and James (both deceased) and nine sisters, plus Sam Lonnie and Bo Chatmon, the younger Chatmon generation. Two of his sisters, Kattie and Viola are still alive. Unfortunately they are unreliable informants.

Charley struck out from the Bolton area in his late teens or early twenties and played in many roadhouses along Highway 80. It was during

this period that he made his home, when he *was* home, with the Pattons. But it should be remembered that his very distinctive singing and playing style came from growing up with the elder Chatmon brothers, and, presumably, their friends. Where these styles came from, if anywhere other than around the Chatmon household, cannot be ascertained. As Sam Chatmon said, 'Charley was a grown man when I was just a child and he was already doing all those things.'

Charley married young. His first common-law wife was named Gertrude. In 1908 at about the age of 21, he married his second wife, Millie Toy, from Boyle, Mississippi.

In 1912 a veritable congregation of guitar players and singers was to be found in and about a small town, Drew, Mississippi. The town is situated near two large plantations which were owned at the time by Will Dockery and Jim Yeagers. Patton was living at Dockery's at this time. Among the resident musicians whose presence in the area in 1912 has been confirmed (in each case by interview, then by checking with one or more of the others who were supposed to be there) were Patton, Willie Brown and his wife – who also played, Tommy Johnson, his brother LeDell, LeDell's wife Marry Bell Johnson, Roebuck Staples of the famous gospel singing family 'The Staple Singers', 'Howlin' Wolf' (real name Chester Burnett, who admits to having taken lessons from Patton, and still imitates his vocal style, unsuccessfully), Dick Bankston, 'Cap' Holmes and a few others who evidently travelled through the area from time to time but whose presence cannot be confirmed due to contradictory information.

According to Sam Chatmon, Patton already played and sang 'just like' the older brothers and sisters of the Chatmon family before he came anywhere near Drew. And since Patton seems to have left Drew still singing and playing in much the same way as before, it may be supposed that he was a major, if not *the* major influence on the Drew scene. Undoubtedly he left with more than he had come with – such atypical Patton songs as *Frankie And Albert* and *Some These Days I'll Be Gone*, for instance – but it seems probable that Tommy Johnson, Willie Brown and others learned much more from Patton than he did from them; this has been admitted by Howlin' Wolf and Roebuck Staples. Some confusion exists as to who learned what from whom, in the case of Tommy Johnson, since Patton's first home was very near Crystal Springs, where Johnson was born. For example, both men recorded versions of *Pony Blues*, for the same company,

less than a year apart. Both played in open G, ‘Spanish tuning’; and not only did they both use the same tune contour – which might have been expected – but Johnson in his treatment (Paramount 13000, *Black Mare Blues*), used virtually the same tune phrases as Patton employed on *Pony Blues*. Both men used to clown; Patton danced round his guitar, Johnson round and on his Gibson. On the other hand, Patton never recorded anything in the standard tuning, key of D; and this was a tuning much favoured by Tommy Johnson, as well as by other musicians who played round Jackson a good deal, such as Tommy McClennan, the *Bullfrog Blues* Man. There are certain songs and verse complexes which are associated with the key of D, such as those found in the many variants of *Big Road Blues* – which Sam Chatmon recorded with the Sheiks, under the title of *Stop And Listen Blues*.

Viola Cannon, Patton's sister, with her daughter Bessie Turner

Dockery's

The significance of all these musicians living in the same area at the same time lies in three facts. First, there was a great deal of communal creation. Secondly, after these people left Drew, the songs, lyrics, styles and so forth, which they had learned and created there, began to appear in the north (as far as Chicago and Detroit, up to the present time) and the rest of the south. They may still be recovered by any field worker virtually anywhere in the United States where there are performing, non-professional

black musicians – even in the western states. (This claim takes no account of instances where the singer has learned the song from a phonograph record, even though some folklorists consider records as merely an extension of the 'normal' person-to-person diffusion process.) Thirdly, these songs, styles and lyrics became known as 'blues' even though performances, and recordings of performances, by city groups had previously been and continued to be called 'blues'. The 'city blues' were generally performed by groups, with quite 'regular' metric structure and textual coherence. These evidently newer 'country blues' were more individual (and perhaps more personal), irregular and textually incoherent or ambivalent (see last chapter).

Certain differences in performance can be described between those singers who went north and those who remained south, but the similarities are much greater. If field recordings and commercially issued phonograph records from the north contain more vocal growling and are delivered more harshly than those from the south, if very few examples from the north exhibit guitar-playing in the key of D while those from the south do, then source-analysis usually indicates that in the north many singers learned their songs and styles, directly or indirectly, from, say, Patton, while those in the south learned theirs from Tommy Johnson.

Musicians from the north were also, to a great extent, influenced by the Son House, Robert Johnson and Muddy Waters group; those in the south by singers from Bentonia, Mississippi – Skip James and his friends – another instance of communal creation.

In many cases, after 1940, and even before that, source analysis indicates that singers learned their songs directly from phonograph records by Patton, Johnson or others. This, I think, represents a gradual breakdown in oral tradition. To attempt to represent the process of learning how to play a song directly from a phonograph record as merely an extension of oral tradition is ludicrous. To attempt to put forth definitive distinctions between a northern and a southern style of singing with the meagre information we have (meagre in comparison with what we need to do so, and could have, had more research been done at least before 1940), information gained primarily from phonograph records issued after 1940, would at this late date be ill-advised.

A few years after Patton's arrival, a black soldier returned from the war in Europe and shot a white man in, or near, Drew. Other musicians had

already moved, but this event really began the Drew diaspora. Most of the blacks in the area were forced to move.

Brown, Staples and his family, and Howlin' Wolf left and went north, carrying their music with them. Wolf still sings many Patton songs and Roebuck Staples plays like Patton and Brown. The Johnsons moved to the Jackson area; Tommy recorded for both Victor and Paramount a few years later, in 1928 and 1930 respectively, and stayed in Crystal Springs until his death in the fifties.

Patton and Johnson appear, in retrospect, to have been more imitated than innovative; more cooperative than creative. Yet few people realise that Patton was part of a large exchange process which went on for several years before his emergence as a prodigious recording star and purveyor of local songs. While Tommy Johnson remained in, or for the most part near Jackson, Patton travelled around a great deal, but chiefly within the confines of the 'Delta'.

Son House

Patton later stayed at Dockery's until 1924, at which time he left and in Merigold met Minnie Franklin, whom he 'married'. This woman is still alive. Her full name is Minnie Franklin Washington, and she lives in Bovina, Mississippi. She reports that Patton was singing *Pony Blues* when she met him in 1924, but the song was probably much older. In Merigold,

Patton became acquainted with two sheriffs, Mr Day and Tom Rushen, and a Mr Halloway who made whisky. Patton composed a song about these people called *Tom Rushen Blues* which he later recorded for Paramount, and *High Sheriff Blues* which he recorded in New York at his last session in 1934. Patton left Merigold in about 1929 (alone) and met Mr Henry C. Spiers of Jackson, Mississippi. Spiers owned a music store in Jackson, and had acted for years as a talent scout for several large record companies. He sent Patton to the Gennett studios in Richmond, Indiana, where on 14 June Patton had his first session for the Paramount Company. (Paramount frequently used the Gennett studios.) Patton spent his remaining years performing in the Yazoo Delta in various towns, usually near the Mississippi River, in Mississippi and Arkansas. He rarely left this area to perform.

Patton probably met Bertha Lee Pate (whom he 'married') in Lula, Mississippi, and Henry Sims (a fiddle player from Farrell) in 1929, shortly after his first recording session. He is reported by Son House to have lived and performed at Lula and at most of the local towns, especially on the plantation of Mr Joe Kirby, where he performed with Son House and Willie Brown. He also lived near there on the plantation of a Mr Geffery. He recorded again for Paramount at the company's own studios in Grafton, Wisconsin, in November and December of 1929, taking Henry Sims with him.

He began acting as subsidiary talent scout for Spiers shortly after his first two records were issued. It was through Patton that Willie Brown and Son House were recorded. In May 1930 he went to Grafton with House, Willie Brown, Louise Johnson (who sang blues and played the piano) and Wheeler Ford of the famous 'Delta Big Four' gospel quartet. Patton's final Paramount session took place on 28 May. According to Son House, Paramount used two microphones, one for voice and one for instrument. Skip James said the same thing except that when he played the piano, the recording engineer also put a microphone on his feet. The artists were well 'lickered up' before recordings were made.

Shortly after this, Patton and Bertha Lee lived for a while in Cleveland, Mississippi. It was here that Bertha Lee is reported to have had a fight with Patton and to have cut his throat with a butcher's knife. She, of course, will not discuss the matter, but the story is well known in Cleveland. That Patton

survived, but with a scar on his throat, and, nevertheless, stayed with Bertha Lee is well established.

In 1933, Patton and Bertha Lee moved to Holly Ridge, where they performed locally together. Patton was suffering greatly at this time, and prior to it, from a heart ailment of which he was soon to die. He was chronically out of breath and it would take him two or three days to recuperate from a night's singing.

In early January of 1934 an 'A&R man', Mr W. R. Calaway of the American Record Company (ARC) went to Jackson in search of Patton. A&R stands for 'Artists and Repertoire'. A&R men work for record companies and music publishers; they select artists for certain songs which they want to get recorded and help supervise the recording sessions. W. R. Calaway performed both functions with such white, 'country' entertainers as Roy Acuff, Bill and Cliff Carlisle, and others. With Patton and Bertha Lee, he probably performed only the latter function. Calaway later tried to get Willie Brown and Son House to record for him, both of whom refused for different reasons. He wanted to take Patton to New York to record for his company. He contacted Spiers and asked him for Patton's address, but Spiers refused to give it to him, because, he claims, Calaway had swindled him in a previous business deal. (Spiers recalls this vividly. Unfortunately, Calaway could not be consulted, since he died in Orlando, Florida in about 1955.) Spiers notwithstanding, Calaway found Patton and Bertha Lee in Belzoni, Mississippi. During the evening of the day Calaway arrived, Patton, Lee, and others were jailed because of a commotion that had occurred in the roadhouse in which they were playing. Mr Purvis, the 'High Sheriff' of Humphreys County, and Mr Webb, his deputy, were the local law-enforcement officers. Calaway later bailed out Patton and Bertha Lee and the three left together for New York. Patton sings about both law-enforcement officers on *High Sheriff Blues*. Patton's (and Bertha Lee's) last recording session took place on 30 and 31 January, and 1 February 1934. At this session Patton sang as the last verse of his *34 Blues*:

> It may bring sorrow, Lord, and it may bring tears, (*twice*)
> Oh, Lord, oh, Lord, let me see your brand new year.

He never did. The ailment which had bothered him for years was to put an end to his life. Shortly after he returned to Holly Ridge from his ARC session, he became ill. He was taken to a hospital in Indianola, Mississippi, on 17 April 1934, released 20 April, and died 28 April. Mississippi State Board of Health Certificate of Death Number 6643 attributes the cause of Patton's death to 'Mitral Valve heart hose' (heart failure).

When fully grown, Patton was quite short, about 5 ft 6 inches tall, and of lean build. He had light skin and Caucasian features. He is reported to have played practically everywhere in the Yazoo Basin and to have travelled with medicine shows. During many performances, as stated, Patton did tricks with his guitar, such as dancing around it, banging on it while he played, and playing it behind his head. He taught Howlin' Wolf, Willie Brown, and Son House a great deal on the guitar.

As distinct from such travelling performers as Blind Lemon, Blind Blake, Lonnie Johnson, and others, Patton spent almost his entire life in or near his native Mississippi Delta. He left it rarely to perform, and only a few times to make records. His recorded repertoire reflects his limited picture of the world. When he does mention place names, such places are usually located in the Yazoo Basin. Here is a list of place names Patton mentions, with the corresponding master numbers:

15220 Memphis, Minglewood (in Memphis).

15221 Pea Vine (name for either any branch line of a railroad or in this case the branch line of the Southern Railroad, which ran from Clarksdale through Shelby, Merigold and other small towns, to Greenville).

15223 Parchman (the Mississippi county farm for Negroes).

L-44 Marion, Arkansas and the Green River. (The Green River is not on any map but is a local name for a small river in the Delta near Dubs.) The Southern Railroad and the 'Yellow Dog' Railroad, a local name for the Yazoo Delta Railroad.

15214 Natchez, Jackson.

L-432 Clarksdale, Sunflower; Helena, Arkansas.

15223 Hot Springs, Arkansas.

L-37 Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana (occur as part of a refrain, probably traditional).

L-38 New Orleans (occurs in a verse of a traditional blues-ballad).

L-41 Louisiana.

L-59 Sumner, Greenville, Leland, Rosedale, Vicksburg, Stovall, Tallahatchie River, Jackson; Blytheville, Arkansas.

L-63 Gulf of Mexico; Vicksburg; Louisiana; Shelby, Illinois (not on any map).

L-77 Chicago.

L-429 Lula.

14725 Belzoni.

14727 Vicksburg, Lula, Natchez, Greenville.

14747 Mississippi, Dago Hill (a local name for the region north of Mound Bayou, Mississippi: a great many Italians live there).

Only the following people are mentioned:

15222 Tom Rushen, Hollaway, Mr Day.

14725 Mr Purvis, Mr Webb.

14739 Hollaway, Will Dockery.

14757 Bertha Lee.

No person of more than local prominence is ever mentioned and no one from outside the state of Mississippi is mentioned. When Patton sings of external events, he usually refers to local ones: the 1927 flood of the Mississippi River (Paramount 12909, *High Water Everywhere – Parts 1 and 2*), the drought of the following two years and how it was felt in Lula (Paramount 13070, *Dry Well Blues*), the demise of the Clarksdale Mill (Paramount 13014, *Moon Going Down*). The one exception is his description of the 'Railroad strike in Chicago' (Paramount 12953, *Mean Black Moan*).

Patton was dependent upon, and a product of, the prevailing socioeconomic conditions of the southern cotton production economy, a semi-feudal society. According to Son House, Sam Chatmon and others, he

detested and avoided manual labour and spent most of his adult years as a semi-professional, paid (or kept) entertainer. There was room in this economy for a few full-time professional entertainers, and although the entertainer did not earn a sumptuous living, he made a decent one relative to the standards of the time and place. If he was supported by numerous roadhouses and corn-liquor salesmen, these roadhouses and bootleggers in turn were dependent upon the (sometimes) wealthy plantation owners. Most Delta blacks worked for the plantation owners and were paid but meagre monetary wages. There was a great deal of restriction of personal freedom, and many blacks led lives similar to those of medieval serfs. Everything was white-owned and the law of the land was white law.

On the other hand, blacks who worked on Delta plantations were always provided with housing (called ‘quarters’) and frequently with food. When the depression came and there was no work, the black workers were fed by the plantation owners, protected by the benevolent southern landowner tradition. There were few jobs in the Delta for blacks that did not deal with cotton, and they could not rise to a very prominent position even among their own people. A black man could become a preacher, but the best he could do in secular life was become an overseer (the leader of a cotton crew) or a musician.

If we search Patton’s lyrics for words expressive of profound sentiments directly caused by this particular cotton-economy, or for words expressing a desire to transcend this way of life, if we search for verses of great cultural significance depicting any historical trend or movement, or aspirations to ‘improve the lot of a people’, we search in vain. Such a search would not be fruitful with any blues-singers. Patton could, of course, only sing about his own limited experience. He had a very narrow view of the world. And there was perhaps no intellectual climate available to Patton for the development of significant thoughts or comments about his and his people’s status.

Cotton pickers in the Mississippi Delta

Patton was an *entertainer*, not a social prophet in any sense. He had no profound message and was probably not very observant of the troubles of his own people. He was not a 'noble savage'. Least of all did he try to express the 'aspirations of a folk'. His lyrics are totally devoid of any protesting sentiments attacking the social or racial *status quo*. In fact, according to Son House, Patton had very good relations with white people, many of whom helped to support him in return for his services. They liked not only his folksongs but also his blues. Both Patton and House were frequently received into white homes, slept in them, and ate in them. The racial segregation of Patton's day was not as rigorous as it is now, and it was not as insidious.

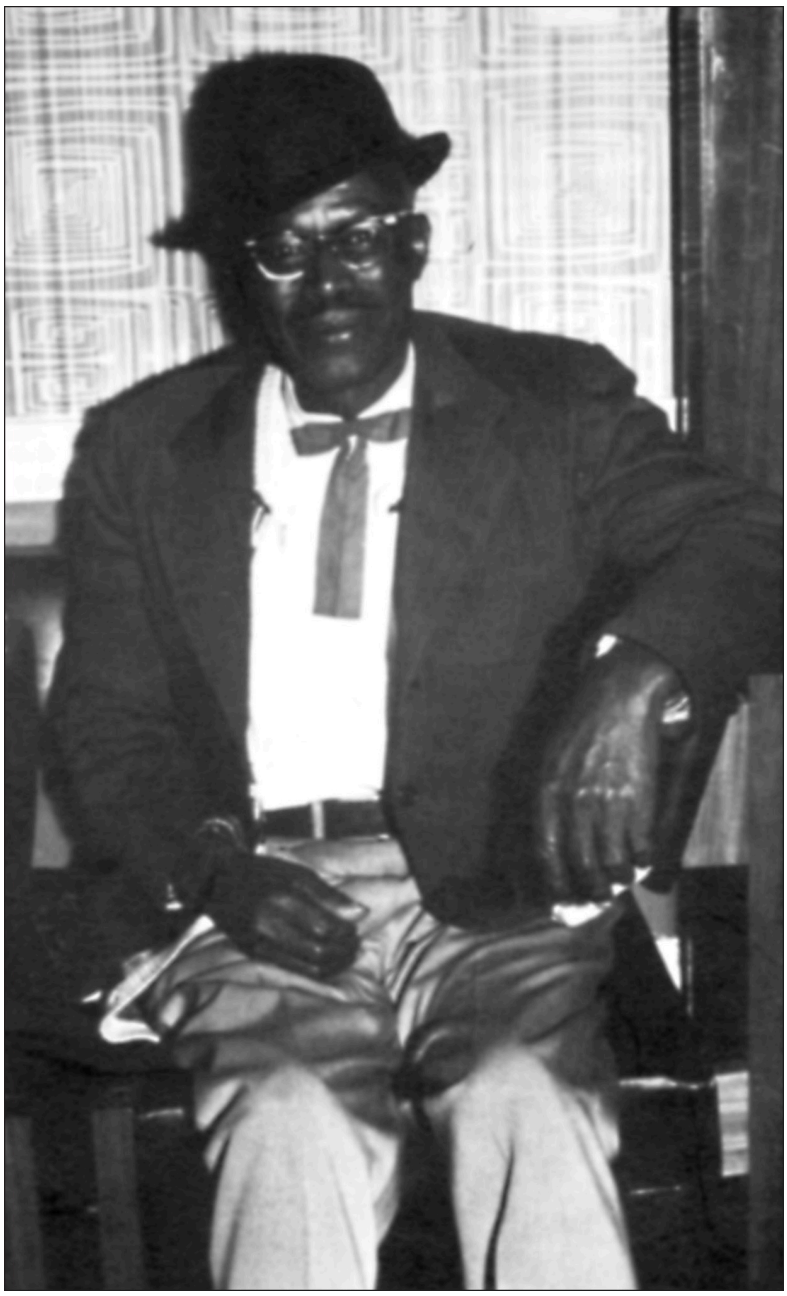
Beyond mentioning place names, Patton's lyrics have nothing distinctively regional about them that could have made them products of only a particular time and place. They could have been produced by any

songster from any agricultural-economy region of the South. Most of his lyrics, or portions of them, are probably floating verses derived from field-hollers and other sources. As such they could have been performed or recombined, as they were, by anyone familiar with the tradition. It is impossible to determine exactly where and when such verses were composed, as it is impossible to reconstruct an authoritative history of black music in general. No one was interested enough at the time to survey what was happening.

As has been implied, the function which Charley Patton performed in his society was, for the most part, that of an entertainer. His function as a musician was subordinate. Patton used his musical abilities, as well as his ability to dance and to do tricks with the guitar, in order *to please an audience*.

We cannot know, of course, what Patton did when he was alone. Perhaps, while entertaining himself (assuming that he did so), he concentrated more on his musicianship. But as star performer of a medicine show, as the source of music for a dance, as roadhouse entertainer, as paid background music for back-country gatherings whenever local corn-liquor salesmen set up shop, Patton's job was to help everyone to enjoy himself.

Son House and Ishmon Bracey both commented on Patton's clowning. House did not approve of it and is to this day critical of Patton. As a result, when some of Patton's recordings were played for House in 1965, he was amazed at Patton's technical proficiency. 'I never knew he could play that good', he said. He then explained that while Patton was apparently a great musician, the purely musical aspect of his public performances suffered as a result of his 'clowning around', which House insists Patton preferred to do.



Son House in London, 1967

The apparent selectivity of House's memory seems strange in view of the fact that House was present while Patton made some of the same records which were played for him 35 years later. But House had simply forgotten that Patton was a competent musician because he saw him so frequently as an entertainer and so rarely as a serious musician. Vocal and instrumental proficiency were necessary for an entertainer, but they were

not enough. Patton had the other talents as well. What we hear, then, on Patton's records is apparently not the way Patton sounded in public. On records we hear him consciously trying to be a good musician. But we should not make too much of the probable differences of performance in the two situations. Patton could not have suddenly summoned up so much technical proficiency at the recording sessions if he did not already possess it. Thus, there were probably other times when Patton performed primarily as a serious musician. Unfortunately, no one remembers such times. Perhaps he performed seriously only when he was alone. If Patton's recordings are of Patton at his musical best and do not sound exactly as he sounded at public performances, there is no reason to suppose that *what* he played (music and text) varied in the two situations. Thus, it seems safe to conclude that Patton's recordings constitute a valuable and accurate sample of what Patton was playing and singing during the last years of his life and probably for many of his earlier years. It should be remembered, for example, that he was performing some version of his *Pony Blues* as early as 1924, five years before his first recording session.

MODES, SCALES, TUNINGS AND NEW TERMS

All of Patton's available *tunes* have been analysed in terms of mode, scale, and metrical structure. It has been necessary to introduce some new terms because none of Patton's songs contains all the notes of any ecclesiastical mode, nor a pattern which seems to be a 'gapped' version of one of these modes. The analysis in this study is of the *scale* of each tune. But, as will be seen, there are modal implications.

The following discussion of mode was written by Dr David Morton, Department of Music, UCLA: 'There is still a good deal of confusion in terminology in Western music, particularly with the terms "scale" and "mode". They are often used interchangeably when, for purposes of clarity and precision, they ought not to be. To help remedy this situation, a few years ago, one of the seminars in ethnomusicology at UCLA attempted to construct a more accurate terminology. The definition of "mode" that they formulated is as follows: mode is a traditional system applied in musical composition and/or improvisation based on a nonequidistant scale of at least three pitches, establishing a hierarchy of pitch relationships expressed in the form of characteristic melodic formulas, and may include additional refinements such as subsidiary pitches, rhythmic considerations, cadential formulas, variation, ornamentation, exchange or substitute pitches, modulation, auxiliary scales or modes, and so forth. What is implied here is that mode exists as a theoretical concept in the mind of the musician or composer before he creates music using that mode (or modes) as a basis for his music, whereas a scale, in more precise definition, is extrapolated from a given specific composition after it comes into existence.'

There are, of course, many non-ecclesiastical modes and scales throughout various musical cultures of the world. The most extreme example is found in the Indonesian Gamelan (Orchestra) in which groups of the same instrument are deliberately constructed so that no two have exactly

the same corresponding pitch. In such cases ethno-musicologists use the term ‘tonal area’. But Patton’s sources were Anglo and Afro-American, and possibly Arabic, since the slaves who were brought to this country were purchased from other Negroes. The original ‘stock’ of Negroes who were brought to this country *may* have heard and been influenced by Arabic music.

No previous analyses of the scales or modes used in folkmusic, black or white, were found to be helpful in analysing the scales of the songs which Patton sings. Gilbert Chase, summarising what previous researchers have done, writes in *America’s Music From the Pilgrims to the Present* that ‘the characteristic trait (of the blues) is . . . the flatting of the third and seventh degrees of the diatonic scale’, which pitches he refers to as ‘blue notes’. But that is also true of melodies in the Dorian, Phrygian, and Aeolian modes. Apparently altering his position, Chase goes on to say ‘. . . it is not the flatted third as such, rather this ambivalent (slurring or wavering between major and minor third), this *worried* or slurred tone, that constitutes the true blue note’. In the next sentence he describes ‘blue notes’ as ‘microtonally flatted’.

Chase actually has said two different things: first, a single ‘blue note’ is a series of slurs, up and down between *two* pitches a half-tone apart. In other words, *two* pitches a half-tone apart and *all the microtones between them* constitute *one* ‘blue note’. A number of microtones cannot be one pitch. Yet he is quite correct when he says that a wavering between the major and minor third is a characteristic of many blues-songs. Secondly, he defines these ‘blue notes’ as ‘microtonally flatted’. A pitch is either major, minor, or a microtonally flatted version of a so-called standard pitch, in this case the major. It cannot be all three things at once.

Mrs Annabel Morris Buchanan, in an analysis of white music [‘A Neutral Mode in Anglo-American Folk Music’, *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, IV (1940), 79], proposes a new mode which she terms ‘neutral’. In it, the second and sixth degrees of the scale are ‘weak’ (i.e., they do not occur frequently). ‘It is the stress on the neutral or major 3rd, perfect 5th and minor (or neutral) 7th together that determines, according to my theory, the neutral mode’. According to this definition, the scales of melodies in the Mixolydian mode could be included in her ‘neutral mode’ category. She later refers to a ‘varying minor seventh’, but she does not say what it varies between. Confusion results from Mrs Buchanan’s equivocal conception of

what constitutes a mode because of her tendency (like Chase's) not to distinguish between major and minor degrees of a diatonic scale and pitches occurring between them, and her postulation of a new mode is of no help in classifying the scales which Charley Patton sings. He never sings a neutral seventh except as part of a slur.

A scale is often defined as the pitches of one composition placed arbitrarily in ascending and/or descending order. Interesting definitions of and discussions of 'scale' may be found in such works as the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*. (pp. 662 ff.) On page 663, 'scale' is said to be 'an ordered arrangement of pitches'.

As stated in the second paragraph of this chapter, differentiation should be made between a pattern of intervals (mode) that exists in the creator's mind before he creates his composition, and the actual pitches he uses in one composition – the 'scale' – which may include such pitches as passing tones, exchange pitches, and so forth, used as decoration and ornamentation, not as Principal pitches of the mode. A scale that contains *both* major (or minor) thirds and sevenths *and* neutral thirds and sevenths cannot be described simply as neutral.

Cecil Sharp noted the occurrence of 'neutral' thirds in the songs of English folk singers. He describes a neutral third as ' . . . neither major nor minor, like the interval between the two notes of the Cuckoo's song, when the spring is waning . . .'

For the purposes of this book, however, the term 'neutral' will be used to designate a pitch occurring approximately half way between two adjacent half-tones in the Western chromatic scale. Such a neutral pitch will not be considered as a distinct pitch if it occurs in a slur between halftones, or in a series of slurs between half-tones, that is, such slurs (which Chase calls 'blue notes', 'worried notes', 'waverings', etc.) will not be construed as individual pitches (as they seem to be by Chase), 'blue', or otherwise. It is no more theoretically defensible, or musically correct, to describe slurs between half-tones in non-high-art music as 'blue' or 'neutral' *single* pitches, than it is to classify by the same terms the identical musical practice in high-art music. If this system were logically extended, a vocal performance of a slur from one pitch to its lower octave, for example, could be termed one 'neutral' pitch.

Patton sings few neutral pitches other than in slurs, and when he does, they are probably 'mistakes', that is, autologically occurring pitches (not a

lead pitch or part of a slur) which he sounds unintentionally – pitches which he probably considered mistakes because he does not repeat them in the corresponding places in the other stanzas, but rather sings stable pitches that conform to those of the chromatic series. Neutral pitches, then as defined in this study, play virtually no part in Patton's singing. Also, particular significance need not be attributed to pitches occurring at the beginning or end of a long pivotal slide in which the first or last pitch is indistinct, faint, and probably arbitrary. In some cases they are spoken rather than sung. Long pivotal slides are indicated by a broken, ascending or descending line.

Without a machine like a Melograph (which was not made available to the author), which would adequately classify the pitches of Patton's sounds, we are left with our own presumably good ears with which to discard the autological neutral pitches. Several professional musicians, including the author, could find but few autological neutral pitches sounded.

The musical transcriptions have usually been made from very scratchy, worn recordings, all issued no later than 1935, recovered, in most cases, by collectors from southern blacks who played them frequently on poor equipment. In addition, Paramount recordings initially were very cheaply made. A few of the records used for transcription were found in record stores and have been played only a few times and on modern equipment. But even mint Paramount records have a noticeable amount of surface noise, which has made accurate musical transcription in some cases very difficult. All of the Vocalion records (ARC) exist in virtually mint condition, and since these were manufactured by a superior process on superior material, transcription of songs on these records has been much easier and much less subject to error.

Transcription has been done in the key in which each song was played on the guitar. This key is not determined relative to absolute pitch (that is, A = 440 cps), since the strings of a guitar are easily tuned up and down, but by customary names which guitarists use to describe the key in which they play. This is determined both by tuning, and in 'standard' tuning by the position of the fingers on the strings and relative position on the neck of the guitar. This system is more convenient since in it fewer sharps and flats are involved. Furthermore, it is impossible to tell at exactly what speed the turntable was revolving when the recordings were made. Consequently, it is impossible to tell, relative to absolute pitch, in what key each recording was made. In one case, *You're Gonna Need Somebody When You Die*

(Paramount 13031), the speed of the recording turntable was not constant and the key, relative to absolute pitch, alters up to a half-tone at different points in the record. In addition, since professional tape-recording equipment was not available, tape recordings of the records are in certain cases at too slow or too fast a speed.

In the following table an asterisk indicates the use of a bottleneck or knife instead of the customary use of the fingers of the left hand to change the pitch of the guitar strings. This method of playing the guitar is quite common in Hawaii. No one has been able to trace the development of this style of guitar playing among rural performers in the United States – polygenesis is always a possibility. According to my system of determining the key, Patton used the following tunings and played in the keys shown in Table I.

Twenty-eight of 46 songs are played in 'Open G'. More than half of these are played with a bottle-neck or knife. All religious songs are played in 'Open G' with a bottle-neck or knife. Two songs are listed under category II. B, as being played in the key of F. These two are in fact one song recorded at two different times. Only one song was issued in 'Open D' tuning, a tuning which outside of Mississippi is more common among black musicians than 'Open G'. 'Open G', as has been said, is similar to a very common banjo tuning. The 'Open G' tuning is often called 'Spanish' because a song called *Spanish Fandango* (or *Spanish Flang-Dang*) is usually played in it.

Only three songs were issued in the key of C, and they are very similar. The tunes and the chordal accompaniment are virtually the same in all three.

Table I. GUITAR TUNINGS AND KEYS

Notes	D	G	D	G	B	D
Strings	6	5	4	3	2	1

I. 'Open G' tuning. The guitar is tuned

Key of G

15211 *Mississippi Bo Weavil Blues**

15214	*Screamin' and Hollerin' The Blues*
15217	*Banty Rooster Blues**
15220	*It Won't Be Long**
15221-A	*Pea Vine Blues*
15222	*Tom Rushen Blues*
15225	*Prayer of Death – Part 1**
15225-A	*Prayer of Death – Part 2**
15226	*Lord I'm Discouraged**
15227	*I'm Going Home**
L-47	*Hammer Blues**
L-48	*Magnolia Blues**
L-49	*When Your Way Gets Dark**
L-50	*Heart Like Railroad Steel**
L-51	*Some Happy Day**
L-52	*You're Gonna Need Somebody When You Die**
L-59	*High Water Everywhere – Part 1*
L-60	*High Water Everywhere – Part 2*
L-61	*Jesue Is A Dying-Bed Maker** [sic]
L-62	*I Shall Not Be Moved**
L-432	*Moon Going Down* (the second guitar played by Willie Brown is in standard tuning, key of E)
L-432	*Bird Nest Bound*
14723	*Jersey Bull Blues*
14725	*High Sheriff Blues**
14746	*Love My Stuff*
14747	*Revenue Man Blues*
14749	*Oh Death**
14752	*Troubled 'Bout My Mother**

{ Notes E A D G B E
Strings 6 5 4 3 2 1

II. Standard tuning. The guitar is tuned

A. Key of E

15216 *Pony Blues*

L-37 *Going To Move To Alabama*

L-38 *Elder Greene Blues*

L-41 *Mean Black Cat Blues*

L-42 *Frankie And Albert*

L-43 *Some These Days I'll Be Gone* [sic]

L-44 *Green River Blues*

L-63 *Rattlesnake Blues*

L-64 *Running Wild Blues*

L-77 *Mean Black Moan*

L-429 *Dry Well Blues*

14727 *Stone Pony Blues*

B. Key of F

15224 *Shake It And Break It But Don't Let It Fall Mama*

14758 *Hang It On The Wall*

C. Key of C

15215 *Down The Dirt Road Blues*

14739 *34 Blues*

14757 *Poor Me*

{ Notes D A D F# A D
Strings 6 5 4 3 2 1

III. Open D tuning. The guitar is tuned

Key of D

15223 *A Spoonful Blues**

TUNE ANALYSIS

The process of transcription which has been used by the author is the following: first a stanza was selected from each tune that Patton sings which seemed to represent a normal or average rendering of the tune – a stanza which was neither too simple nor contained an unusual number of ornamental notes. These selected stanzas were played on a tape-recorder and the notes heard were written down as quickly as possible, but repeated playing of the stanzas was always necessary. In some cases the tape-recorder had to be slowed down from 71/2 ips (the speed at which the records were recorded on the tape) to 31/2 ips in order to check certain difficult passages. All transcriptions were checked and, in many instances, corrected by Mr Al Wilson.

The solfeggio system of indicating the degrees of the chromatic scale will frequently be used. For those readers unfamiliar with it, it is given here in its entirety:

DO	RA	RE	ME	MI	FA	FI	SOL	LE	LA	TE	TI	DO
C	D♭	D	E♭	E	F	F#	G	A♭	A	B♭	B	C
P1	m2	M2	m_3	M_3	P4	A4	P5	m6	M6	m_7	M_7	PI

In the third line, the type of interval is indicated as follows: ‘P’ for ‘perfect’, ‘m’ for ‘minor’, ‘M’ for ‘major’, ‘A’ for ‘augmented’, and ‘D’ for ‘diminished’.

Table II is a tally of all the pitches which Patton sings in one stanza from every tune he recorded. Not only does it contain stressed pitches, but it also includes pitches which are sung only once or twice in each tune. Grace notes are also counted. Pitches that may be neutral are indicated in the transcriptions, but in this tally they are listed as what they probably are if they are not neutral. Below the final tally column is a column entitled

‘Adjusted Totals’. It contains the results of subtracting the four largest occurrences of each pitch from the column above it. In cases where the smallest number occurs more than once, it has been subtracted from the above figure only once. This column has been included so that the frequency of certain pitches of atypical songs, such as *Hang It On The Wall* (which contains 16 occurrences of TI, otherwise quite rare), does not give a false impression as to the overall order of frequency of the pitches which Patton sings. A final tabulation shows the absolute order of frequency and the adjusted order of frequency of the Solfeggio degrees of the scale which Patton sings, the most frequently occurring degree of the scale being at the left and the least frequent degree at the right. The pitch ‘DO’ is the most frequently sung pitch, and ‘TI’ (in the adjusted order of frequency) the least sung.

The entire process of tabulation is then repeated in two categories: first in songs classified textually as ‘blues’ and ‘blues-ballads’, and secondly, in religious songs. The reason for doing this will become obvious. The ‘Adjusted Totals’ columns in these two categories contain the results of subtracting the two largest occurrences of each pitch from the columns above them. Pitches from songs which are considered ‘problematical’ are not counted in either of these two categories. These problematical songs are numbers 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 40 in the tabulation. They will be discussed below.

It will be seen that the 11 religious songs are pentatonic (DO, RE, MI, SOL, LA) with the added minor third (ME), usually used as a leading-tone to the high or major third (MI), but not always, as in *Oh Death*. Nevertheless ME appears autologically fewer times in the religious songs than it does in the blues songs. The blues songs can hardly be considered pentatonic since TE occurs more times than RE. (Dorothy Scarborough in an article called ‘The “Blues” as Folksongs’ states that W. C. Handy told her that ‘the blues . . . have only five tones, like the folksongs of slavery times, using the pentatonic scale, omitting the fourth and seventh tones’.) LA is more prevalent in the spirituals than ME. In the blues songs the position of ME and LA is reversed.

In a similar analysis done by Mr Al Wilson, six songs by Tommy Johnson display the following absolute order:

DO ME SOL MI LA RE FA TE TI FI LE RA

85	61	50	48	40	27	8	6	6	4	1	0

The outstanding characteristics of Johnson's pitch usage in comparison with Patton's is the greatly stressed minor third, and the prevalence of the sixth degree of the scale over the seventh. But six songs were all that were available, and that is perhaps too small a sampling.

In any case, if we compare our frequency schedules with those of Henry Edward Krehbiel, in his book *Afro-American Folksongs*, which is perhaps the only similar analysis ever made, we find that Krehbiel's sources are radically different from the tradition with which we are dealing in this paper, or the transcriptions which he analysed were very inaccurate. Of 527 songs which Krehbiel analysed, 331 (about two-thirds) were found to be either in the Ionian mode, or gapped versions of the Ionian mode. Less than 12 per cent were found to be either complete or gapped versions of the Aeolian, Dorian or Mixolydian modes. Nineteen of these were found to be in the 'Harmonic Minor' scale DO RE ME FA SOL LE TI DO, and 23 were 'mixed and vague'.

Apparently no songs were transcribed which had both ME and MI. This seems very strange. For if we examine our tabulation we see the following: RA and LE play no part in Patton's singing. TI and FI are relatively insignificant. FA while rare occurs almost twice as many times as FI. Bearing in mind that FA is rare relative to the rest of the degrees in the scale, the stressed pitches which Patton sings are:

DO	RE	ME	MI	FA	SOL	LA	TE	DO.

Table II

Transcription number and title	Degrees of the scale											
	DO	RA	RE	ME	MI	FA	FI	SOL	LE	LA	TE	TI
1. *High Water Everywhere - Part 2*	8	0	1	14	10	0	0	5	0	4	3	0
2. *Screamin' and Hollerin' The Blues*	12	0	2	12	5	3	1	7	0	0	2	0
3. *Love My Stuff*	15	0	0	14	14	0	2	6	0	2	0	0
4. *Down The Dirt Road Blues*	11	0	0	5	7	1	0	7	0	0	9	0
5. *Banty Rooster Blues*	16	0	2	6	7	1	0	7	0	2	4	1
6. *It Won't Be Long*	22	0	0	7	3	2	0	11	0	0	1	0
7. *Pony Blues I*	9	0	2	6	7	0	0	7	0	16	0	0
8. *Pony Blues II*	18	0	1	9	9	0	0	7	0	3	1	0
9. *Pony Blues III*	14	0	1	5	11	0	0	6	0	9	1	0
10. *Dry Well Blues I*	12	0	2	11	10	0	0	9	0	8	9	0
11. *Dry Well Blues II*	16	0	0	10	11	0	0	5	0	6	5	2
12. *Dry Well Blues III*	11	0	0	11	9	0	0	7	0	10	3	0
13. *Mississippi Bo Weavil Blues*	10	0	0	2	1	0	0	3	0	1	3	0
14. *Pea Vine Blues I*	13	0	1	5	4	0	0	8	0	4	7	0
15. *Pea Vine Blues II*	13	0	0	7	5	0	2	11	0	0	16	0
16. *Hammer Blues*	21	0	0	8	8	1	0	10	0	3	6	0
17. *When Your Way Gets Dark*	8	0	1	3	8	2	3	7	0	1	2	0
18. *Tom Rushen Blues*	15	0	3	2	10	0	0	8	0	11	0	0
19. *Green River Blues*	10	0	0	3	9	7	4	9	0	0	0	2
20. *Elder Greene Blues*	16	0	5	7	12	2	0	3	0	3	3	0
21. *Mean Black Cat Blues*	8	0	0	2	9	9	2	11	0	1	8	0
22. *Mean Black Moan*	12	0	0	5	9	4	5	9	0	1	1	0
23. *Going To Move To Alabama*	10	0	2	3	9	0	0	13	1	13	3	1
24. *Frankie and Albert*	15	0	4	5	12	6	2	4	0	0	0	1
25. *Hang It On The Wall*	35	0	9	2	13	0	0	18	0	14	7	16
26. *Some These Days I'll Be Gone* [sic]	22	0	13	1	16	4	1	10	0	1	0	0
27. *Running Wild Blues*	4	0	0	5	14	4	2	3	0	0	0	1
28. *A Spoonful Blues*	6	0	1	0	1	5	2	8	0	3	0	1
29. *Nearer My God To Thee*	8	0	4	0	3	0	0	2	0	4	0	1
30. *Singing Sermon*	26	0	0	0	11	1	9	18	0	0	0	2
31. *Hold To God's Unchanging Hand*	13	0	4	2	6	0	0	4	0	6	0	0
32. *Lord I'm Discouraged*	15	0	2	6	6	0	0	7	0	6	0	0
33. *Some Happy Day*	16	0	5	9	8	0	0	9	0	7	2	1
34. *I'm Going Home*	17	0	0	4	8	3	0	7	0	4	1	0
35. *You're Gonna Need Somebody When You Die*	12	0	3	5	13	1	1	11	0	7	2	1
36. *I Shall Not Be Moved*	18	0	22	2	24	2	0	3	0	4	0	4
37. *Troubled 'Bout My Mother*	33	0	3	8	11	0	0	6	0	10	5	0
38. *Oh Death*	42	0	0	15	15	0	0	14	0	10	19	0
39. *Jesue Is A Dying-Bed Maker* [sic]	34	0	0	1	9	3	5	19	0	0	1	
40. *Poor Me*	15	0	9	8	6	6	3	17	2	6	6	0
Totals	631	0	102	230	363	67	44	336	3	180	119	53
Adjusted Totals	500	0	53	176	294	40	21	267	0	126	77	12
Blues and Blues-Ballads	305	0	25	159	190	38	21	157	0	85	84	6
Adjusted Totals	227	0	11	108	141	13	7	114	0	39	47	0
Religious Songs	234	0	43	52	114	10	15	100	0	54	19	28
Adjusted Totals	160	0	16	28	75	4	1	63	0	34	6	5

Absolute order of frequency	DO	MI	SOL	ME	LA	TE	RE	FA	TI	FI	LE
Adjusted order of frequency	DO	MI	SOL	ME	LA	TE	RE	FA	FI	TI	
Blues and blues-ballads	DO	MI	ME	SOL	LA	TE	FA	RE	FI	TI	
Adjusted order of frequency	DO	MI	SOL	ME	TE	LA	FA	RE	FI		
Religious songs	DO	MI	SOL	LA	ME	RE	TI	TE	FI	FA	
Adjusted order of frequency	DO	MI	SOL	LA	ME	RE	TE	TI	FA	FI	

There are two primary subdivisions of this scale which are listed below. In all but two cases where this scale is used, (i.e., where TI does not replace TE) at least one pitch is omitted, usually three or four.

Such gapped scales are to be regarded as incomplete forms of the above scale with *eight* autological pitches, and must be taken as the complete scale. As can be seen from the tally, the inclusion of both major and minor thirds (MI and ME) is absolutely essential.

This scale is a composite of the Dorian and Mixolydian ecclesiastical modes. Krehbiel makes no mention of such a scale. In view of its predominance among forty of Patton's tunes that have been transcribed, Krehbiel's analysis and/or his sources do not correspond with the tradition that Patton represents.

The pitches of our scale are common to both Dorian and Mixolydian modes except the major and minor thirds. In the Mixolydian mode the third is major and in the Dorian mode the third is minor. The two conspicuous features of our scale are the occurrence of both major and minor thirds, as has been pointed out, and the consistent appearance of the minor seventh with the absence of the major seventh. This results in an overall harmonic framework in Patton's vocals of a somewhat ambivalent tonic chord (DO ME MI SOL), a major IV chord (FA LA DO), and a minor V chord (SOL TE RE). This is true for both voice and guitar except for the V chord in which the guitar is often SOL TI RE. Examples of TE in the voice and TI in the guitar are *Mean Black Moan* (ninth measure) and *Stone Pony Blues* (eleventh measure).

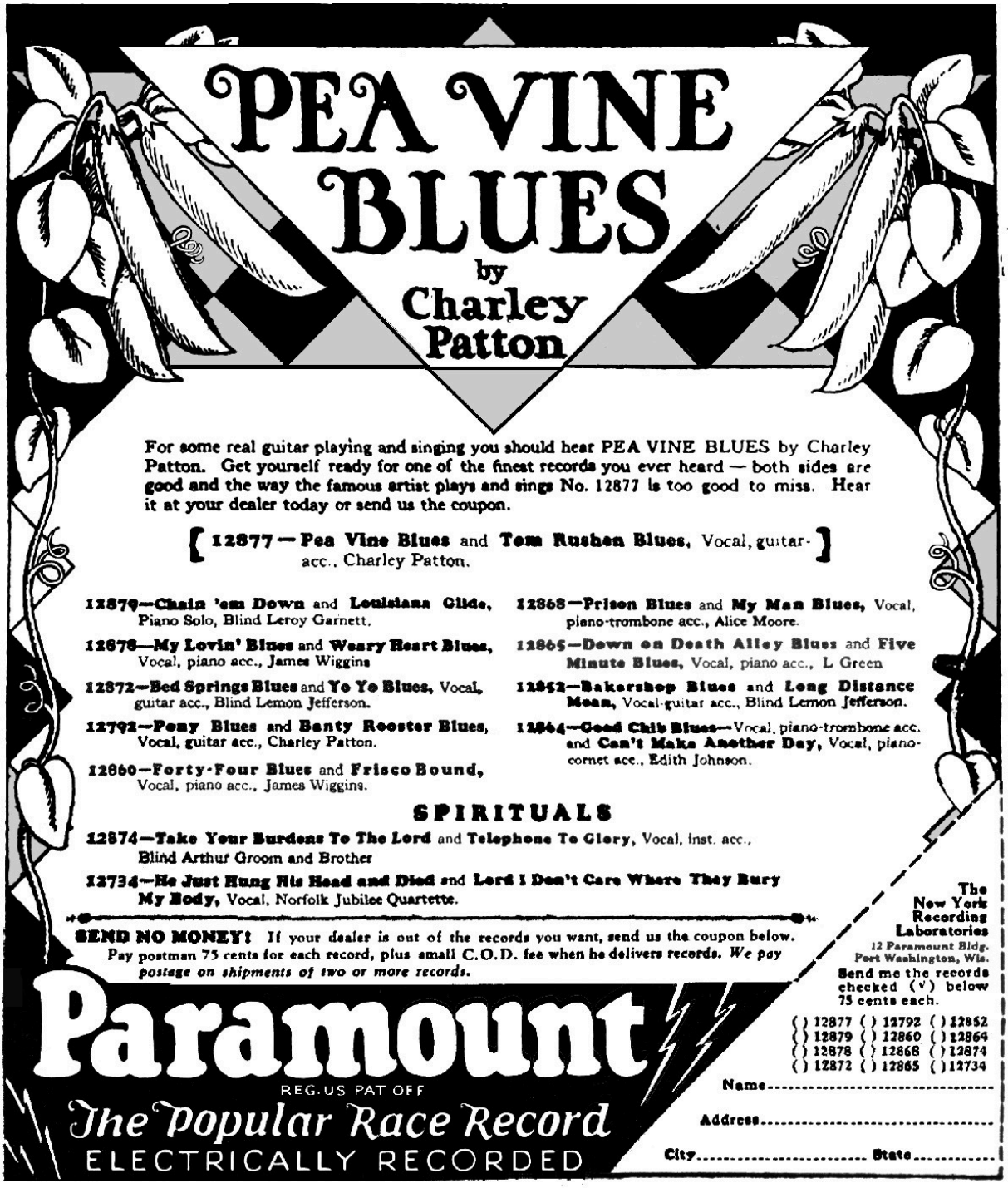
FI is usually used as a leading tone to SOL. It is placed in parentheses when so used. It is seldom used independently of SOL.

In cases where the minor third is used as a leading-tone to a major third, it is given as follows: DO (ME) MI. This is very common in blues songs and particularly in Patton's blues. When both thirds appear autologically they are given as follows: DO ME MI. The major third is never used as a leading-tone to the minor third.

In each 'tune stanza' transcribed, a tally was made of pitch usage, and those scale degrees appearing but once or twice are dispensed with unless they are pivotal pitches. Thus the following classification is an analysis of stressed tones. All lead pitches are given if they occur more than twice, and are put in brackets. The thirds are examined to determine the exact nature of

the scale. The scales of all Patton's blues and most of his other songs fall into one of the following two categories:

Blues Mode I:	DO	RE	ME	MI	FA	SOL	LA	TE	DO.
Blues Mode II:	DO	RE	(ME)	MI	FA	SOL	LA	TE	DO.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Charley Patton
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12879—Chain 'em Down and Louisiana Glide, Piano Solo, Blind Leroy Garnett.
12878—My Lovin' Blues and Weary Heart Blues, Vocal, piano acc., James Wiggins
12872—Bed Springs Blues and Yo Yo Blues, Vocal, guitar acc., Blind Lemon Jefferson.
12792—Peny Blues and Banty Rooster Blues, Vocal, guitar acc., Charley Patton.
12860—Forty-Four Blues and Frisco Bound, Vocal, piano acc., James Wiggins.
12868—Prison Blues and My Man Blues, Vocal, piano-trombone acc., Alice Moore.
12865—Down on Death Alley Blues and Five Minute Blues, Vocal, piano acc., L Green
12852—Bakershop Blues and Long Distance Moan, Vocal-guitar acc., Blind Lemon Jefferson.
12864—Good Chib Blues—Vocal, piano-trombone acc. and Can't Make Another Day, Vocal, piano-cornet acc., Edith Johnson.
SPIRITUALS
12874—Take Your Burdens To The Lord and Telephone To Glory, Vocal, Inst. acc., Blind Arthur Groom and Brother
12734—He Just Hung His Head and Died and Lord I Don't Care Where They Bury My Body, Vocal, Norfolk Jubilee Quartette.
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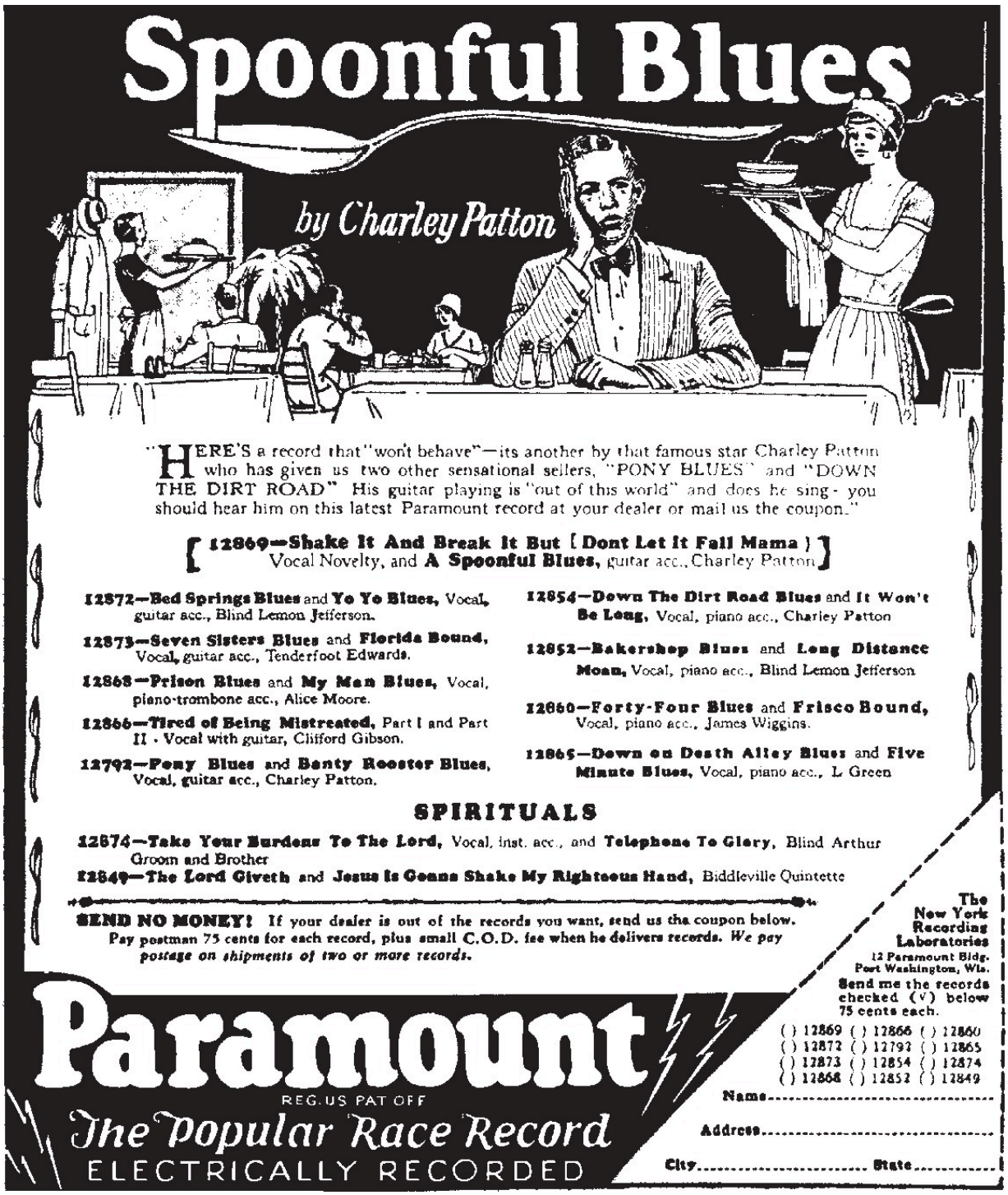
The following classification is thus also an analysis of mode. It rests upon presupposition. The pitches which Patton sings are to a great extent determined by two traditions. First, there are field hollers and religious songs which are sung without instrumental accompaniment, and therefore

with no accompanying chord changes. The differences in pitch frequency between Patton's religious and secular songs have been noted. The former tend to be more pentatonic than the latter. But there are no indications that Patton thought, played, or sang in two distinct modes, one religious, the other secular. The categories, 'Blues Mode II', and 'Major Pentatonic' are quite adequate descriptions of Patton's religious songs. *I Shall Not Be Moved*, however, is in the Ionian (major) mode without a fourth. But it was composed by a white man.


Spoonful Blues
by Charley Patton
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[12869—Shake It And Break It But (Dont Let It Fail Mama) Vocal Novelty, and A Spoonful Blues, guitar acc., Charley Patton]
12872—Bed Springs Blues and Yo Yo Blues, Vocal, guitar acc., Blind Lemon Jefferson.
12873—Seven Sisters Blues and Florida Bound, Vocal, guitar acc., Tenderfoot Edwards.
12868—Prison Blues and My Man Blues, Vocal, piano-trombone acc., Alice Moore.
12866—Tired of Being Mistreated, Part I and Part II - Vocal with guitar, Clifford Gibson.
12792—Pony Blues and Banty Rooster Blues, Vocal, guitar acc., Charley Patton.
12854—Down The Dirt Road Blues and It Won't Be Long, Vocal, piano acc., Charley Patton
12852—Bakershop Blues and Long Distance Moan, Vocal, piano acc., Blind Lemon Jefferson
12860—Forty-Four Blues and Frisco Bound, Vocal, piano acc., James Wiggins.
12865—Down on Death Alley Blues and Five Minute Blues, Vocal, piano acc., L Green
SPIRITUALS
12874—Take Your Burdens To The Lord, Vocal, inst. acc., and Telephone To Glory, Blind Arthur Groom and Brother
12849—The Lord Giveth and Jesus Is Gonna Shake My Righteous Hand, Biddleville Quintette
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Secondly, there is a tradition (or traditions), probably white, of singing with instrumental accompaniment utilising frequent chord changes among at least the major I, IV and V chords.

Most of Patton's songs come from the former tradition. What Patton and others like him added to it was instrumental accompaniment, and, as a result of this in most cases, a regular (in many cases accelerating) tempo or pulse. To determine whether a particular song comes from the former tradition, its scale must be examined to ascertain if it could be sung within the harmonic framework dictated by instrumental accompaniment in the major I chord. Any pitch could in theory be sung with the accompaniment of any chord. But, as can be seen in the previous tabulation of pitches which Patton sings, he sings only certain pitches and not others. Among the pitches which he sings, he stresses some and not others. He rarely sings the major seventh, for example.

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12802—How Come Mama Blues and Voice Throwin' Blues, Walter Hawkins; novelty vocals with guitar acc.
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Patton's repertoire as a whole represents a continuum between the two traditions which have been postulated. On the one end of the continuum is *A Spoonful Blues*, with accompaniment in four chords: major VI, II, V, I (in the key of D: B, E, A, D), the ragtime progression. This song is

chromatically constructed and its tune cannot be adequately described by Blues Mode I or II. The author knows of no examples of such a song being sung without instrumental accompaniment.

On the other end of the continuum are *Oh Death, Troubled 'Bout My Mother*, *Mississippi Bo Weavil Blues* [sic], and *Mean Black Cat Blues*, all songs in which the major I chord is the only accompanying chord. TI does not occur in any of these songs. Then there are such songs as *Pea Vine Blues*, which, in its two musical stanzaic forms (AAB and ABB, each comprising 12 bars), contains three split measures with chordal accompaniment in the major I^7 chord and major V chord. Again, TI does not occur. The remainder of the 24 measures of this song has only the major I chord as accompaniment. In *It Won't Be Long*, there is one split measure containing the major I chord and the major IV chord and one measure containing the major V chord; the rest of the song is accompanied only by the major I chord. The same is true of *Banty Rooster Blues*. TI does not occur in *It Won't Be Long* but does occur once in *Banty Rooster Blues*, as an ornament to the lower DO. As *A Spoonful Blues* is approached on the continuum, the more frequent is found to be the occurrence of chord changes and of the occurrence of TI. *Hang It On The Wall* contains 16 occurrences of TI! Songs such as *Oh Death*, and those similar and therefore near it on the continuum, are clearly predominant in Patton's repertoire.

"PONY BLUES"

by Charley Patton

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[12792—Pony Blues and **Banty Rooster Blues,** Charley Patton and His Guitar.]

12791—Sing Song Blues and **Smiling Blues,** Jack O'Diamonds; Guitar acc. by Bob Coleman.

12790—Fetch Your Water and **Soon This Morning Blues,** Charlie Spand and Guitar; piano acc.

12788—Gutter Man Blues and **Wobblin' in the Mud,** Geo. Hannah; instrumental acc.

12773—Bucket Of Blood and **Playing The Dozen**—Piano Solos by Will Ezell.

12714—Selling That Stuff and **Beedle Um Bum,** The Hokum Boys; Piano-Guitar acc.

12771—Oil Well Blues and **Saturday Night Spender Blues,** Blind Lemon Jefferson and His Guitar.

12758—Wasn't That Doggin' Me and **Rockin' On The Hill Blues,** Beale Street Shelks and Guitars.

Sacred Numbers

12785—How It Is With Me and **I Want To Know Will He Welcome Me There,** Norfolk Jubilee Quartette.

12630—His Eye Is On The Sparrow and **I Wouldn't Mind Dying If Dying Was All,** Norfolk Jubilee Quartette.

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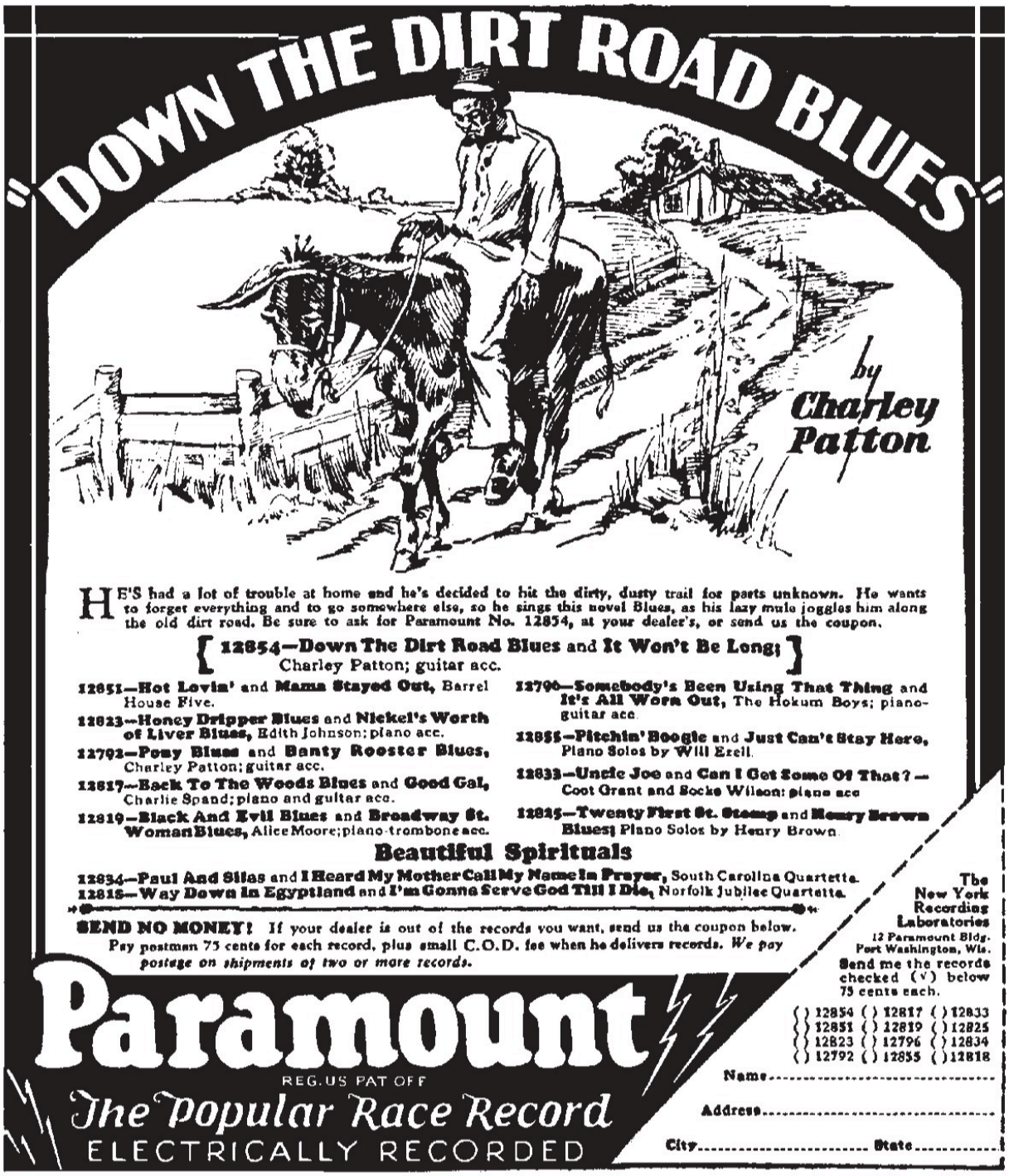
"DOWN THE DIRT ROAD BLUES"
by Charley Patton
HE'S had a lot of trouble at home and he's decided to hit the dirty, dusty trail for parts unknown. He wants to forget everything and to go somewhere else, so he sings this novel Blues, as his lazy mule joggles him along the old dirt road. Be sure to ask for Paramount No. 12854, at your dealer's, or send us the coupon.
[12854—Down The Dirt Road Blues and It Won't Be Long; Charley Patton; guitar acc.]
12851—Hot Lovin' and Mama Stayed Out, Barrel House Five.
12823—Honey Dripper Blues and Nickel's Worth of Liver Blues, Edith Johnson; piano acc.
12792—Pony Blues and Banty Rooster Blues, Charley Patton; guitar acc.
12817—Back To The Woods Blues and Good Gal, Charlie Spand; piano and guitar acc.
12819—Black And Evil Blues and Broadway St. Woman Blues, Alice Moore; piano-trombone acc.
12796—Somebody's Been Using That Thing and It's All Worn Out, The Hokum Boys; piano-guitar acc.
12855—Pitchin' Boogie and Just Can't Stay Here, Piano Solos by Will Ezell.
12833—Uncle Joe and Can I Get Some Of That?—Coot Grant and Socke Wilson; piano acc
12825—Twenty First St. Stomp and Henry Brown Blues; Piano Solos by Henry Brown.
Beautiful Spirituals
12834—Paul And Silas and I Heard My Mother Call My Name In Prayer, South Carolina Quartette.
12818—Way Down in Egyptland and I'm Gonna Serve God Till I Die, Norfolk Jubilee Quartette.
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In view of the decreasing number of recordings of songs in the field holler tradition after 1931 (assuming that commercial recordings can in a qualified sense be considered a good representative sample of Afro-American music in the U.S.A. and of its development), it might be

supposed that such songs as *Oh Death* and *Mississippi Bo Weavil Blues* are older in black tradition than songs which are found at the other end of the continuum. In view of the predominance of songs in the field holler tradition among black recordings as opposed to its rarity among recordings of white performers, we might further suppose that such songs with their characteristic use of Blues Mode I or II are distinctively black in origin. However, this is speculative, and much more research must be done before any decisive conclusions can be drawn.

In any case, a continuum may be shown to exist in Patton's recordings. Although many inferences and implications might be drawn from the predominance in them of the field holler type of song, it is nevertheless assumed only that two traditionals are represented and that the pitches of most of his songs were determined by their derivation from field hollers or spirituals. When songs were derived from such sources, the use of the guitar did not change their harmonic structure. With songs in which frequent chord changes occur, and in songs in which the major seventh is frequently accompanied by the major V_7 chord, a different tradition is predominating and determining the pitches which Patton sings – a tradition in which the accompanying instrument determines to a much greater extent what pitches are to be sung than in the postulated field holler tradition, an unaccompanied tradition and the one from which Patton in most cases drew his harmonic framework. Exceptions appear to exist, however, and, as will be seen, some songs are problematical.

Table III. A Classification of the Songs According to Scale

Rather than listing the stressed tones for each song, the pitches of Blues Modes I or II which are not stressed or do not appear at all are listed.

I. Blues Mode I, DO RE ME MI FA SOL LA TE DO
   A. Complete
      1. *Elder Greene Blues*. Out of 16 measures the major IV^7 chord is used in four measures. FA, which is sung with the major IV^7 chord in this song, is sung nine times in *Mean Black Cat Blues* with only the major I chord accompaniment. FA, as has been said, is one of Patton's rarely sung pitches.
      2. *Poor Me*. This song is problematical. In addition to the chordal accompaniment of major I, II, IV, V, and minor III

(in the key of C: C, D, F, G, E♭) with numerous accidentals, it contains two instances of FI and LE. Neither its structure nor its text is blues. It is probably of Tin Pan Alley origin. Since in this section of the study, pitches are disregarded if they occur but twice, those that are left are the complete Blues Mode I. It is perhaps indicative of the predominance of this mode (and perhaps of the field holler tradition) in Patton's mind being applied to a popular song which may originally not have had its present harmonic structure.

B. Gapped Blues Mode II
   1. *High Water Everywhere – Part two* (no second).
   2. *Screamin' And Hollerin' The Blues* (no sixth).
   3. *Love My Stuff* (no second, fourth, sixth or seventh).
   4. *Banty Rooster Blues* (no fourth).
   5. *It Won't Be Long* (no sixth or seventh).
   6. *Hammer Blues* (no second or fourth).
   7. *Mississippi Bo Weavil Blues* (no second, fourth, or sixth).
   8. *Mean Black Moan* (no second, sixth or seventh, but with added augmented fourth).
   9. *Troubled 'Bout My Mother* (no fourth).
   10. *Oh Death* (no fourth).
   11. *Jesue Is A Dying-Bed Maker* (no second or sixth but with added augmented fourth).

Most of the above songs do contain instances of ME used as a leading-tone to MI, but ME occurs autologically (that is, without the ornamentation of MI by ME) at least twice in each of them.

II. Blues Mode II, DO RE (ME) MI FA SOL LA TE DO
   A. Complete: None
   B. Gapped Blues Mode II
      1. *Green River Blues* (no second, sixth or seventh).
      2. *Down The Dirt Road Blues* (no second, fourth or sixth).
      3. *Frankie And Albert* (no sixth or seventh). This tune is accompanied by the major I, IV^7 and V^7 chords. FA occurs only when the major IV^7 chord is played, but since FA is not dependent upon the major IV^7 chord (as in *Mean Black Cat*

Blues), *Frankie and Albert* is not especially problematical regarding its harmonic tradition. The song was apparently composed by one Mammy Lou, a popular cabaret singer in St Louis, around the turn of the century. Thanks to its great popularity, Patton could have learned it anywhere. Since we do not know what tune it was sung to by Mammy Lou we do not know what its original scale was, but it seems clear that Patton thought of its tune within the context of the postulated field holler tradition.

4. *Going To Move To Alabama* (no fourth). This song is problematical. Accompaniment is in the same three chords as in *Frankie And Albert*: it contains one instance each of TI, FA, LE, and FI. It is thus rather chromatic and perhaps should be listed below with the ragtime songs. Since it is structurally of the recitative blues form (12 bars: 4 one-measure phrases with changing text, followed by a chorus of eight bars: 1 vocal, 1 rest, 1 vocal, 1 rest, 2 vocals, 2 rests), similar to *Hesitating Blues* by W. C. Handy, and *Jim Jackson's Kansas City Blues*, it perhaps belongs in a category of its own. Patton's rendering of this song is very similar to Jim Jackson's song. Although Patton might have learned the song before Jim Jackson recorded it (two years before Patton recorded it), since both Jackson and Patton were medicine show entertainers, company pressure may have been exerted on Patton to record it because Jackson's recordings of it sold enormously well. An entire chapter is devoted to Jim Jackson and his song in Charter's book, *The Country Blues*, yet Patton's version of the song is not mentioned.
5. *Pea Vine Blues* I and II (no second or fourth). Roman numerals here and elsewhere indicate more than one tune in the same song.
6. *Pony Blues* I (no second, fourth, or seventh). The three different tunes of this song all contain one full measure of chordal accompaniment in the major IV^7 chord and one-half measure in the major V chord, or portions of these chords.

Since FA does not occur, the song is not especially problematical.

7. *Pony Blues* I, II and III (no second or fourth).
8. *Dry Well Blues* I, II, and III (no second or fourth). This group of tunes is very similar to the *Pony Blues* tunes. It is significantly different in that it contains minor sevenths in all three tunes. These sevenths occur frequently in places where in *Pony Blues* major sixths normally occur. *Stone Pony Blues* (Vocalion 02680), a later rendering of *Pony Blues* (Paramount 12792), also has this characteristic of substituting minor sevenths for major sixths. The performance of *Dry Well Blues* is strongly influenced by the addition of the second guitar of Willie Brown, who played very loudly with a flat pick. Thus it is difficult to hear exactly what Patton is playing. The overall sound, however, is one of more pronounced chord changes between the major I, IV^7, and V^7 chords than in *Pony Blues*. The IV^7 and V^7 chords are more complete, definite, and of longer duration than in Patton's usual rendering of this tune when he is accompanied only by himself on guitar, as on *Stone Pony Blues*, *Rattlesnake Blues*, and others.
9. *Mean Black Cat Blues* (no second or sixth).
10. *When Your Way Gets Dark* (no second or sixth but with added augmented fourth).
11. *I'm Going Home* (no second or seventh).

III. Other Scales or Modes

A. Major Pentatonic (no fourth or seventh). In this category are listed tunes which have rare occurrences of (ME) or ME. *Love My Stuff*, which contains no fourth or seventh (or second or sixth), is not listed here because of the *frequent* autological occurrence of ME. It is thus listed under I.B., 'Gapped Blues Mode I.'

1. *Some Happy Day*. This is a church song, probably of white origin.
2. *Hold To God's Unchanging Hand*. This is part of *Prayer of Death – Part 2*. It is a church song probably of white origin.

3. *You're Gonna Need Somebody When You Die*. Pentatonic with five occurrences of (ME). Probably of black origin.
4. *Lord I'm Discouraged*.
5. *Nearer My God To Thee*. This is part of *Prayer of Death – Part I*, and is a guitar solo. It contains no fourth, fifth, or seventh.
6. *Tom Rushen Blues* – contains two occurrences of (ME). Out of twelve measures, three are accompanied by the major IV chord. But FA is not *sung*.

B. Major Triad (DO MI SOL with FI as frequent leading-tone to SOL. *No* occurrences of (ME).
1. *The Singing Sermon*. This is part of *Prayer of Death – Part Two*.

IV. Tunes which are either chromatic, virtually chromatic, or gapped instances of the Ionian (major) mode, which seems unquestionably derived from sources other than the postulated field holler tradition and with little influence from it. The tunes are to a great extent influenced by the chordal accompaniment, and have frequent chord changes. Stressed tones are listed.

A. *A Spoonful Blues* (DO RE MI FA FI SOL LA DO, where FI is used as the major third of the major II chord rather than as augmented fourth of the major I chord).

B. *Hang It On The Wall* (DO RE MI SOL LA TE TI DO). This song contains 16 occurrences of TI used with the major V^7 chord. The chordal accompaniment begins with this chord and half the song is accompanied by this chord.

C. *Running Wild Blues* (DO RE ME MI FA FI SOL). Chordal accompaniment is approximately divided equally among the major I, IV^7 and V^7 chord.

D. *Some These Days I'll Be Gone* (DO RE MI FA SOL). This song has chordal accompaniment in the same chords as the last song, with the V^7 chord dominating.

E. *I Shall Not Be Moved* (DO RE MI SOL LA TI). Ionian (major) mode without a fourth. Of white origin.

TUNE FAMILIES

The concept of 'tune family' is especially applicable (and enlightening) to the repertoire of Charley Patton and to the repertoires of other Delta singers as well. For our purposes a 'tune family' means a group of melodies with a similar sequence of stressed pitches, with similar or identical pivotal pitch sequences (or pitches). Metrical differences are disregarded, as well as harmonic or chordal differences in the instrumental accompaniment. Only the final pitch of a slur is considered unless one of the pitches in the slur is emphasised or lingered upon.

Table IV

I. The *High Water Everywhere* Family. In all cases the scales of these tunes are gapped versions of Blues Mode I (DO RE ME MI FA SOL LA TE DO). Selected stanzas from the following songs have been transcribed.
   A. *High Water Everywhere – Part 2* (no second).
   B. *Screamin' And Hollerin' The Blues* (no sixth).
   C. *Love My Stuff* (no second, fourth, sixth, or seventh).

   In A the highest pitch in stanzas Al and A2 is either the major or minor third. In B the highest pitch in Al is the fifth above the third. The tune then proceeds as in A. In C both A1 and A2 start on the fifth and the melody proceeds as in A. In all three the melody is built around the tonic, third, and fifth, the other pitches being for the most part passing tones. Thus, the omission or inclusion of these pitches is not an important factor in the melodic classification. All three forms A, B, and C appear in all three songs. The following songs are also members of this tune family and contain various combinations of types A, B, and C described above: *Heart Like Railroad Steel* and *Jersey Bull Blues*. These two songs have in common the peculiar

characteristic of beginning the first A stanza of the song with chordal accompaniment in the major IV^7. No significant changes in tune result from this, and all of the other A1 stanzas have chordal accompaniment only in the major I or major I^7. Other members of this family are *High Water Everywhere – Part 1*, *Moon Going Down*, *Bird Nest Bound*, and *Revenue Man Blues*.

II. The *Minglewood Blues* Family. Patton recorded no song entitled *Minglewood Blues*. This term was chosen because it is the title of Victor 21267 by Cannon's Jug Stompers (recorded 30 January 1928), a record which sold quite well. It was probably the first recording of a tune which was later recorded by virtually every country blues singer. Recordings of this tune are so numerous that a separate study should be made of them only. Patton, on one of his recordings of the tune (*It Won't Be Long*), even sings the key stanza of the Jug Stompers' recording.

> You ever go down to Memphis, stop by Minglewood, baby.
> You Memphis women don't mean no man no good.

A. *It Won't Be Long* (no sixth or seventh).
B. *Banty Rooster Blues* (no fourth).
C. *Down the Dirt Road Blues* (no second, fourth or sixth).
D. *34 Blues* (identical scale with C).

A, B, C, and D are three distinct melodies in the same family. The differences lie mainly in rhythmic phrasing, tempo, and guitar accompaniment. The first two are played in open G tuning with a knife, using almost exclusively the major I chord. The second two are played in standard tuning in the key of C, with the addition of the chords F, E, and G. *34 Blues* only is performed in triple metre. But these differences do not disguise the fact that virtually the same tune is being sung. In the following songs, verse A1 is that of the Minglewood tune, but verses A2 and B are not:

1. *Pea Vine Blues*.
2. *Pony Blues* II.
3. *Dry Well Blues* II.

III. The *Dry Well Blues* Family. This family, as does the following family, comprises three distinct tunes, which are given roman numerals I, II, and III.
   A. *Dry Well Blues* I, II and III (no second or fourth). This group of tunes is virtually the same as the following family, but in it, minor sevenths frequently occur instead of the major sixths of the following family. The *Dry Well Blues* Family also includes:
      1. *Rattlesnake Blues*.
      2. *Stone Pony Blues*.

IV. The *Pony Blues* Family. This is a compilation of three tunes transcribed as I, II, and III. In this family as in the above family we treat the three tunes as one song. Thus the form is given as AAB, CDB, and EAB rather than AAB, ABC, and ABC. We can thus see that 'tune stanza' B occurs in all three tunes, that A occurs in III and so forth.
   A. *Pony Blues* I. 'Tune stanza' form is AAB. The key pitches are DO MI SOL LA.
   B. *Pony Blues* II. Form is CDB, C is similar to verse A1 of the *Minglewood Blues* family and B is the same as *Pony Blues* I.
   C. *Pony Blues* III. Form is EAB. A and B as above.

V. The *Green River Blues* Family.
   A. *Green River Blues* (no second, sixth or seventh).
   B. *Mean Black Moan* (no second, sixth or seventh but with augmented fourth).
   C. *Mean Black Cat Blues* (no second or sixth).

   None of these songs has the second or sixth degrees of the scale. The fourth degree is usually quite rare in Patton's singing, but in these three songs it occurs seven, four, and nine times, respectively. There are more melodic differences among the members of this family than among the others. *Mean Black Moan* is textually a blues ballad, of the AAB stanza form. *Green River Blues* is textually a blues song but musically it is of the ABC stanza pattern. *Mean Black Cat Blues* is textually a blues and also follows the AAB stanza pattern. FA occurs frequently in only five other songs: *Poor Me* (six times), *A Spoonful Blues* (five times), *Running Wild Blues* (four times), *Some These Days*

I'll Be Gone (four times) and *Frankie And Albert* (six times). *A Spoonful Blues*, *Running Wild Blues*, and *Some These Days I'll Be Gone* are all tunes which are either chromatically constructed or are based on gapped versions of the Ionian (major) mode. The occurrence of FA in them would thus be expected. *Poor Me* can also be considered to some extent at least as being chromatically constructed although its *stressed pitches* are those of the complete Blues Mode I. *Frankie And Albert* was probably learned by Patton from a source which made more use of the fourth degree of the scale.

The use of the fourth degree of the scale in Patton's songs which are textually blues, or blues-ballads of the AAB stanza pattern, is quite rare. Its use is also quite rare in Patton's religious songs, even in those of probable white origin. Among Patton's secular songs there is no possibility of correlating the scarcity of fourths with possible scarcity of sevenths, minor or major. Such a nexus would of course indicate a general pentatonic character of Patton's blues and blues-like songs. In songs in which no fourth appears, minor sevenths regularly appear, as well as minor thirds.

There are at least two other members of this family which deserve mention. They are sung and played on the fiddle by Henry Sims, but Charley Patton plays the guitar.

D. *Tell Me Man Blues* (Paramount 12940).

E. *Farrell Blues* (Paramount 12912).

In these two songs the fourth is prevalent and the order of their stressed pitches is virtually the same as the rest of the members of this family.

An asterisk indicates (1) a 12-bar structure in which the 'tune stanzas' are of unequal length or (2) a 12-bar structure which is not musically of the AAB form. Numbers in parentheses indicate the regular number of measures in a particular stanza, while the number next to it indicates that the stanza which has been transcribed is irregular.

Of the 13 transcriptions listed in Table V which are of the AAB form, only four are composed of equal four-measure stanzas. Since the remainder of the songs in AAB form are not

equally divisible by three, it is evident that at least one stanza of each does not contain the same number of beats as the other stanzas. Of these, two contain three stanzas of unequal length. The average length of all of the AAB songs is 12.5 measures. This tabulation includes item number 16, *Hammer Blues*. Its metrical pattern is 3/4/4½(5) – three stanzas of unequal length which nevertheless add up to 12 measures. Patton rarely holds to a rigid 12-bar metrical structure. Items number 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 40 display a diversity of metrical structure. They are the same songs which in this scale analysis were found to be either problematical (in terms of origin) and uncharacteristic of Patton in general, or of rag-time origin, which is also uncharacteristic of Patton.

Nine of 13 religious items either have or have approximately a 16-measure structure of four four-bar 'tune stanzas'. Of these nine it is assumed that they are all of white origin except *Jesue Is A Dying-Bed Maker* and *You're Gonna Need Somebody When You Die*. It cannot be demonstrated that they are indigenous Negro songs, but a comparison of their texts with the texts of the other religious songs (of 16 measures or approximately 16 measures) indicates that the two groups come from radically different sources, whatever they may be. On the other hand, since the 16-measure pattern is characteristic of many folk hymns and spirituals of white origin – as George Pullen Jackson's compilations readily indicate – the songs in question may have been modelled upon originally white ones.

Table V. Structural Analysis of the Songs

	Transcription Number and Title	Musical Stanza Form	Number of 4 Beat Measures per Stanza	Total Number of 4 Beat Measures
1	*High Water Everywhere - Part 2*	AAB	$4^{1}/_{4}/4/4$	$12^{1}/_{4}$
2	*Screamin' and Hollerin' The Blues*	AAB	$4/5^{1}/_{2}(5)/4$	$13^{1}/_{2}$
3	*Love My Stuff*	AAB	$3^{1}/_{2}/5/4$	$12^{1}/_{2}$
4	*Down The Dirt Road Blues*	AAB	$4^{1}/_{2}/4^{1}/_{2}/4^{1}/_{2}$	$13^{1}/_{2}$
5	*Banty Rooster Blues*	AAB	$4/4/4^{1}/_{2}(4)$	12
6	*It Won't Be Long*	AAB	$4/4/3^{1}/_{2}$	$11^{1}/_{2}$
7	*Pony Blues I*	AAB	$4^{1}/_{2}/4^{1}/_{2}/5$	14
8	*Pony Blues II*	CDB	$3/5(4^{1}/_{2})/5$	$12^{1}/_{2}$
9	*Pony Blues III*	EAB	$5/4^{1}/_{2}/5$	$14^{1}/_{2}$
10	*Dry Well Blues I*	AAB	$4/4/4^{1}/_{2}$	$12^{1}/_{2}$
11	*Dry Well Blues II*	CDB	3/5/5	13
12	*Dry Well Blues III*	EAB	$4/4/5^{1}/_{2}$	$13^{1}/_{2}$
13	*Mississippi Bo Weavil Blues*	A	$7^{1}/_{2}$	$7^{1}/_{2}$
14	*Pea Vine Blues I*	AAB	4/4/4	12
15	*Pea Vine Blues II*	ABB	4/4/4	12
16	*Hammer Blues*	AAB	$3/4/4^{1}/_{2}(5)$	12*
17	*When Your Way Gets Dark* (stanza five only is AAB)	AB	4/4	8
18	*Tom Rushen Blues*	AAB	$4/4/3^{1}/_{2}$	$11^{1}/_{2}$
19	*Green River Blues*	ABC	$4^{1}/_{2}/4^{1}/_{2}/5^{1}/_{2}$	$14^{1}/_{2}$
20	*Elder Greene Blues*	ABAB	4/4/4/4	16
21	*Mean Black Cat Blues*	AAB	$4/3^{3}/_{4}(4)/4$	12
22	*Mean Black Moan*	AAB	4/4/4	12*
23	*Going To Move To Alabama*	ABC	4/4/4	12*
24	*Frankie And Albert*	ABC	4/4/4	12*

25	*Hang It On The Wall*			
	A. Chorus	ABABCD	2/2/2/2/2/2	12*
	B. Verse	EBABCD	2/2/2/2/2/2	12*
26	*Some These Days I'll Be Gone*			
	A. Verse	ABAC	4/5/4/5	14
	B. Chorus	D	7	7
27	*Running Wild Blues*	ABCB or CBCB	4/4/4/4	16
28	*A Spoonful Blues*	ABCD	Eight four-bar measures and two two-bar measures	9
29	*Nearer My God To Thee*	ABAC	4/4/4/4	16
30	*Singing Sermon*	Free Rhythm, two stanzas approximately equal, repeated numerous times.		
31	*Hold To God's Unchanging Hand*	ABCD	4/4/4/4	16
32	*Lord I'm Discouraged*	ABCD	4/4/4/4 1/2	16 1/2
33	*Some Happy Day*			
	A. Chorus	ABAC	4/4/4/4	16
	B. Verse	DC	4/4	8
34	*I'm Going Home*	ABAC	4/3(4)/4/4	16
35	*You're Gonna Need Somebody When You Die*	ABCA	4/4/4/4	16
36	*I Shall Not Be Moved*			
	A. in 6/8 time	ABCD	4/4/4/3(4)	16
	B. in 4/4 time, increased tempo	ABCD	4/4/4/3 1/2	15 1/2
37	*Troubled 'Bout My Mother*	ABCD	2/3/2/2 1/2	9 1/2
38	*Oh Death*	ABAC	4/4/4/3 1/2	15 1/2
39	*Jesue Is A Dying-Bed Maker*			
	A. Verse	ABAC	2/2/2/1 1/2	7 1/2
	B. Chorus	DDDE	2/2/2/2 1/2	8 1/2
40	*Poor Me*	CBCD	4/3/4/4 1/2	15 1/4
		A occurs once and has 4 1/2 measures		

AN EXAMINATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF THE TEXTS

I. *Blues*

Formally, most of the songs which are here called ‘blues’ exhibit the AAB stanza form. Songs which do not exhibit this form are indicated by an asterisk. None of them contains refrains. Few commonplaces or formulæ occur other than variants of the following:

I think I heard (a certain train or boat whistle) blow, (*twice*) followed by either

It blowed just like my rider getting on board.

or

It blowed just like it wasn’t going to blow no more.

(see texts 15221, L-44, L-47, L-432.)

Some people say (a certain kind of) blues ain’t bad (*twice*),
It must not have been the (certain kind of blues) I (or they) had.

(see texts 15215, and L-44.)

I’m going away, don’t you want to go?

(see texts 15214, 15215, L-44, and L-49.)

I’m worried now but I won’t be worried long.

(see texts 15215 and L-44.)

Vicksburg's on a high hill, Louisiana's just below.

(see texts 15214, L-63 and 14727.)

There are 15 occurrences of these formulæ in all of Patton's stanzas. All of them are traditional commonplaces which were used by other black singers in many different forms, and these commonplaces appear in printed collections.

In no case does the use of a particular commonplace play an integral or even especially important part in one of Patton's texts. But, as will be seen, the same can be said for practically any of Patton's stanzas, be they commonplaces or not.

In some cases Patton seems to use commonplaces for the sole purpose of attaining assonance or rhyme:

Jackson on a high hill, Mama, Natchez just below. (*twice*)
I ever get back home, I won't be back no more.

(Paramount 12805, *Screamin' And Hollerin' The Blues*.) In Patton's dialect 'below' and 'more' rhyme. But the attainment of assonance or rhyme cannot be given as the 'reason' behind Patton's use of commonplaces, or for anything else he does. The first two stanzas of *Down The Dirt Road Blues* are:

I'm going away to where I don't know. (*twice*)
I'm worried now, but I won't be worried long.

My rider got somethin', she try to keep it hid. (*twice*)
Lord, I got something to find that girl somewhere.

In this connection there is an amusing stanza from *Jersey Bull Blues*:

And my bull's got a horn, long as my arm.
And my bull's got a horn, baby, long as my arm.
Spoken: Boy, long as my arm.
Aw, bull got a horn, long as my arm.

Patton uses the words, ‘Lord’, ‘Lordy’, and ‘babe’, ‘baby’ in most cases for metrical reasons to fill in a portion of the melody. An outstanding example of this is in *Mississippi Bo Weavil Blues*, in which ‘Lordy’ or ‘Lord’ occurs 28 times. In no case is either of these words essential to or even a rational part of the text. In *It Won’t Be Long* there are 14 occurrences of ‘baby’. This word is not essential to the text. In fact, the use of it in this song creates confusion by giving the impression that the singer is speaking to someone. But the stanzas indicate that he is not.

In many cases it seems that to Patton words and even entire stanzas were subservient to the performance as a whole. Entertainers such as Patton ‘entertain’ by arousing certain emotions or feelings in the listener. Patton was most successful in doing this. But he did not rely on ‘rational’ texts to do it.

Examination of the texts, tunes, and structures of all the songs shows that a large number of songs have more in common textually than musically. Most of these songs would normally be called blues. Most of them are in Blues Mode I or II. But so are some of the religious songs, and even some of the problematical songs. What differentiates this group of songs from all the others is, more than anything else, what their texts have in common. The outstanding characteristic of these songs is the disconnection, incoherence, and apparent ‘irrationality’ of the stanzas. A good example of this is the text of *Pony Blues*:

Hitch up my pony, saddle up my black mare. (*twice*)
I’m going to find a rider, baby, in the world somewhere.

Hello, central, ’sa matter with your line?
Hello, central, matter, now, with your line?
Come a storm last night, tore the wires all down.

Got a brand new shetland, man, already trained.
Brand new shetland, baby, already trained.
Just get in the saddle, tighten up on your reins.

And a brownskin woman like something fit to eat.
Brownskin woman like, something fit to eat.
But a jet black woman, don’t put your hand on me.

Took my baby, to meet the morning train.
Took my baby, meet that morning train.
And the blues come down, baby, like showers of rain.

I got something to tell you, when I gets a chance.
Something to tell you, when I get a chance.
I don't want to marry, just want to be your man.

The first and third stanzas of this song may be considered coherent in that they both deal with horses. The other stanzas have nothing to do with horses, and nothing to do with each other. In the last two stanzas the singer says that he took his girl-friend to the train on which she presumably left him. Then he felt depressed. When he gets a chance, he wants to tell her he doesn't want to marry her but only wants to sleep with her. For more examples of extreme incoherence among the stanzas, see texts 15215, 15220, L-44, and 14747.

Some groups of stanzas, such as the following from *Banty Rooster Blues* are to some extent coherent in that they deal with one subject:

I'm going to buy me a banty, put him in my back door. (*twice*)
Lord, he see a stranger coming, he'll flap his wings and crow.

What you want with a rooster, he won't crow 'fore day? (*twice*)
What you want with a man when he won't do nothing he say?

What you want with a hen won't cackle when she lay?
What you want with a woman when she won't do nothing I say?

These stanzas all deal with chickens. But whereas the first stanza is simply a statement of intention, the second two compare the disappointing actions of roosters and hens with the failures of men and women. The singer goes on to ask 'what good are any of them?'

Another group of 'coherent stanzas' occurs in *Jersey Bull Blues*.

If you got a good bull cow, you ought to feed your bull good at home. (*twice*)
There may come along a young heifer and just tow your bull from home.

Oh, my bull's in the pasture, Babe, Lord, where there's no grass.
And my bull's in the pasture, Lord, where there's no grass.
I swear every minute it seems, like it's going to be my last.

And my bull's got a horn long as my arm.
And my bull's got a horn, baby, long as my arm.
Aw, bull got a horn, long as my arm.

Again we find coherence only in the mentioning of a certain type of animal – and in the sexual suggestions.

Perhaps the most coherent group of stanzas is found in *Mean Black Cat Blues*.

It's a mean black cat, Lordy, crawling on my pillow. (*twice*)
I'm going down to Louisiana where I won't sit and worry no more.

It's a mean black cat, Lordy, all around my bed. (*twice*)
I'm gonna get up some morning, kill that black cat dead.
It's a mean black cat, Lordy, Lord it's wearing my clothes.
It's a mean black cat, Lordy. I mean it's wearing my clothes.
If you want any more of my loving, let that black cat go.

In these stanzas, the singer manages to complain for three entire stanzas about a sexual competitor! Such coherence is unparalleled in 20 of Patton's songs.

If we were to approach the textual classification in another way, eliminating religious songs, ragtime songs, and blues-ballads, we should still be left with these same 20 songs. And among these 20 the only outstanding characteristic is stanzaic disjunction. All three of the 'coherent' stanza groups noted above are the first three stanzas of the songs from which they are quoted. In all three cases, Patton, after singing these 'coherent' stanzas, goes on to other matters.

Thus, where Patton is to some extent coherent, in that he mentions one subject matter, he is nevertheless only 'to some extent coherent'. And the stanzas of each song, taken as a whole, remain disjunctive. Most of them could be interchanged. A difference in their order would not increase (or decrease) their 'rationality'. It is as though Patton, at each recording session, had a series of random stanzas concerning different subjects

running through his mind –a stream of consciousness composed of numerous disjunctive blues-verses –and that what the recordings did was register certain segments of this thought process. If one listens to the *first stanza* of each song, expecting some sort of elaboration concerning the subject matter of the first stanza to follow, he will in most cases be disappointed. In many of the songs the *last stanza* leaves one 'up in the air'. A good example of this is from *Rattlesnake Blues*. The last stanza, totally unrelated to any previous one, is:

> And my baby's got a heart like a piece of railroad steel,
> Baby got a heart like a piece of railroad steel.
> If I leave here this morning, never say 'Daddy, how do you feel?'

No explanation is given. The listener does not know why the terminal stanza is terminal. He feels that more should be said about the matter. But nothing is said, for the record ends. Nor was there any previous reference to the subject of this stanza.

Other stanzas seem to represent isolated thoughts, which could not be related to any other stanza, unless it were a parallel statement or explanation. Such stanzas again seem to occur at random. The last stanza of *Banty Rooster Blues* is:

> I know my dog, anywhere I hear him bark. (*twice*)
> I can tell my rider, if I feel her in the dark.

This is no part of any 'rational' thought sequence of which the author can conceive.

Few of Patton's stanzas describe internal psychological events. A notable exception occurs in *Pony Blues*:

> Took my baby to meet the morning train.
> Took my baby . . . meet that morning train.
> And the blues come down, baby, like showers of rain.

It is not characteristic of Patton to brood *textually* for more than a verse or two about his internal feelings regarding women or anything else.

On the other hand, from a musical point of view, songs such as *It Won't Be Long*, played for the most part with one chord accompaniment and with

the use of the bottle-neck technique, a tune contour consisting of a quick ascent to the minor third and a gradual descent to the fifth, minor third, and tonic below it (a total range of a tenth), *produce* a generally depressing psychological effect, as though the singer were brooding.

Observations such as this are, of course, open to the charge of cultural relativism. Perhaps, someone might say, Patton thought of this type of music as 'happy' music. Nevertheless, in Western musical traditions such a tune contour is generally considered 'sad', whereas tune contours which perhaps move in the opposite direction in the Ionian mode are considered 'happy'.

Textually, from an emotional point of view, the stanzas of *It Won't Be Long* are ambivalent. Here is a paraphrase of the verses with an appraisal of their apparent happy, sad or neutral intent:

1. My girl friend is going to cook me some food and sleep with me. 'happy'.
2. Memphis women are whores. 'sad'.
3. My girl friend is a whore. 'sad'.
4. I'm going to leave town. Maybe not. 'sad'.
5. My girl friend is a whore. (expressed ironically) 'sad'.
6. I'm going to tell you something. 'neutral'.
7. I have a good woman, sexually active with me. 'happy'.

Thus we have two 'happy' stanzas, occurring at the beginning and end of the song, four 'sad' stanzas and one 'neutral' stanza. The stanzas as a whole thus appear to be ambivalent textually and from an epistemological point of view, psychologically unavailable, or non-sensical.

Another type of stanza which Patton frequently uses may be described as 'enigmatic'. In this type of stanza one or more external events are mentioned, but the significance of the event is not stated explicitly or implicitly. An example of this is from *Moon Going Down*.

> Oh, well where were you now, baby, Clarksdale Mill burned down? (*twice*)
>
> The answer:

I was way down Sunflower with my face all full of frowns.

which does not assist us in ascertaining the reason for the mention of the demise of the ‘Clarksdale Mill’.

One of the ‘enigmatic’ stanzas occurs in the previously mentioned *Green River Blues*:

It was late one night, everything was still.
It was late one night, baby, everything was still.
I could see my baby upon a lonesome hill.

From the previously mentioned *Hammer Blues* we have:

Going to buy myself a hammock, carry it underneath through the trees.
Going to buy myself a hammock, going to carry it underneath the tree.
So when the wind blow, the leaves may fall on me.

Patton frequently speaks between the verses he sings. This is most unusual among blues-singers with the notable exception of Huddle Ledbetter, whose songs were brought to the ears of many white listeners in the north by John Lomax. ‘Leadbelly’ used this technique to explain to his listeners the meaning and significance which he attributed to the verses he sang. He thus frequently put his blues-stanzas in the context of a story. Patton’s spoken interjections, on the other hand, are usually only repetitions or anticipations of the verses he sings. In *34 Blues*, for example, we have:

Well, look down the country! It almost make you cry. (*twice*)
Spoken: My God, children.
Women and children flagging freight trains for rides.

Carman got a little six Buick, big six Chevrolet car.
Carman got a little six Buick, little six Chevrolet car.
Spoken: My God, what solid power.
And it don’t do nothing but follow behind Holloway’s farmer’s plough.

Such spoken interjections frequently occur between verses of ‘enigmatic’ stanzas. The interjections do not serve to increase the coherence of the stanzas. Neither do they help clarify the significance of the ‘enigmatic’ stanzas.

Enigmatic stanzas increase the qualitative incoherence of the songs as a whole. In general, however, an attempt to attribute some significance to any stanza or to search for some sort of hidden or implicit coherence among the stanzas implies that there is a pre-supposition in the mind of the analyst, that *all songs* of necessity must have some sort of textual coherence or 'reason', and that each stanza must have some significance in terms of this postulated hidden coherence. The presupposition that all songs must have coherent stanzas thus represents an attempt to apply an external standard, probably derived from familiarity with popular (composed) songs of Western Europe and America, to a genre to which this standard is perhaps completely inapplicable.

In the analysis above, an attempt was made to show that in a few of Patton's songs there seems to be some *emotional* coherence; that there is *sometimes* an emotional correspondence between the texts and the music, which thus produces a certain amount of emotional unity. Speaking generally, however, and concentrating on the *texts*, no particular stanza or group of stanzas appear to have any special significance or 'reason', other than, in most cases, giving a title to a song composed of unrelated stanzas.

For example, the title *Down The Dirt Road Blues* (Paramount 12854) must have been derived (probably by the A. & R. man) from the last stanza of that song:

Can't go down this dirt road by myself. (*twice*)
I don't carry my rider, gonna carry me someone's else.

But none of the other stanzas in the song has anything to do with dirt roads, or who is going down them.

The selection of a title may have been arbitrary. Any stanza of a song could have served to give that song a title. But it is impossible to tell which came first, the title, to which a stanza is related, or the stanza or group of stanzas. Patton might have been singing a song or complexes of unrelated stanzas for years to which he gave no titles. At a recording session after performing a particular song he was either asked what the title was, or the recording engineer assigned a title to the performance. Or perhaps Patton might have decided upon a title of a song to be 'composed', and then deliberately set about making up stanzas to accommodate the title.

This latter seems quite unlikely, however, in view of the incoherence of the stanzas. But where small clusters of coherent stanzas appear, such as in *Pony Blues*, and *Banty Rooster Blues*, this latter possibility acquires greater probability. Patton at an early age might have actually written coherent songs, or he might have learned them from others. But in any case by the time he got to the recording studios, Patton's blues texts leave one with an overall impressionistic feeling.

Various unrelated portions of the universe are described *at random*. These blues are an extreme case of oral-formulaic creativity in which the singer, if he does not (and Patton probably did not) actually make up the stanzas at the time of the performance, simply selects stanzas and verses at random from a large storehouse of them in his mind.

Son House, who took up the guitar in 1928 (quite late in comparison with Patton, Brown and other Delta singers, with the exception of Robert Johnson) preferred to compose songs with coherent stanzas. Regarding Patton's texts, House stated in an interview with Barry Hansen, Mark Levine and the author: 'Charley could make up so many different, foolish monkey junk pieces . . . One thing I want to say about Charley, I got to say it . . . some pieces, his blues is not too sincerely [sincere] in a way because he mixes up other words that's not sincerely [sincere] in it. But he still call it the blues . . . A lot of his [Patton's text of *Pony Blues*] he'd have a lot of some crap in there I didn't like . . . and I wanted it to be just as straight out about the pony, all the way. That's the reason I changed some of it.'

Even in Son House's mind, Patton's stanzas were incoherent. A further problem results from Patton's peculiar difficulties with pronunciation. This has certainly been a problem in transcribing the words to his songs. House said during the same interview: 'A lot of Charley's words, . . . you can be sitting right under him . . . you can't hardly understand him.'

A List Of Patton's Blues (Total of Twenty)

15214 *Screamin' And Hollerin' The Blues*

15215 *Down The Dirt Road Blues*

15216 *Pony Blues* (sometimes*)

15217 *Banty Rooster Blues*

15220 *It Won't Be Long*

15221 *Pea Vine Blues* (sometimes*)

L-41 *Mean Black Cat Blues*

L-44 *Green River Blues* (textually, AAB; musically ABC)

L-47 *Hammer Blues*

L-48 *Magnolia Blues**

L-49 *When Your Way Gets Dark**

L-50 *Heart Like Railroad Steel*

L-63 *Rattlesnake Blues* (sometimes*)

L-432 *Moon Going Down*

L-433 *Bird Nest Bound*

14723 *Jersey Bull Blues*

14727 *Stone Pony Blues* (sometimes*)

14739 *34 Blues*

14746 *Love My Stuff*

14747 *Revenue Man Blues*

* See use of asterisk in Table 1, p. 30.

II. *Blues-Ballads*

These are characterised by a description of external events, frequently with references to the singer's involvement in the events and his attitudes towards them. The narrative is more implied than stated. Patton assumes that his audience is already aware of the sequence of events on which he comments. This assumption was quite correct in four, possibly five of his ballads. Delta blacks were quite familiar with the invasion of their land by the boll weevil (which Patton describes in *Mississippi Bo Weavil Blues*) and with the fight which Frankie and Albert had, or at least many of them have told the author that they knew all about it. Patton's text of *Frankie And Albert* is aprocryphal and to some extent confused. Delta blacks had experienced the 1927 flood of the Mississippi River and probably found Patton's description of his involvement in it quite entertaining. They had experienced the drought of 1928 and 1929 and again were probably

entertained by Patton's description of what he and the other 'citizens 'round Lula' (in *Dry Well Blues*) did about it. Perhaps some of them knew about the 'railroad strike in Chicago', described in *Mean Black Moan*.

It is quite unlikely that many of Patton's audience were aware of the events described in *Tom Rushen Blues* and *High Sheriff Blues*, both of which describe Patton's imprisonment by small town law-enforcement officers. The tunes of these two songs are the same, and a few of the stanzas are identical. By listening to the texts one may easily determine that the songs are about Patton's imprisonment on two separate occasions. But it is most difficult, if not impossible, to determine what the events were which led up to his imprisonment, not to mention their sequence. Thus either Patton made a wrong assumption that his audience was familiar with these events, or the songs perhaps are an indication that Patton was only familiar with narrative songs which do not give a straight-forward journalistic account of the events which the songs discuss. He thus made up these songs using other songs such as *High Water Everywhere* as models. Or perhaps he was simply incapable of *making up* or *singing* a song whose text was journalistic. This seems to be the case with his *singing* of *Frankie And Albert*, a song which he did not write. Patton's version is most confusing. The last stanza indicates that Frankie's mother came to the grave of Albert, broke down crying, and said,

My only son is dying.

In most variants of this song Frankie and Albert are lovers. But for Patton's text to be construed as coherent, it must be assumed that Frankie and Albert were sister and brother, and that Albert was not already dead when placed in his grave.

Commentary regarding *Elder Greene Blues* should wait upon comprehension of the two unintelligible stanzas and a comparison of these stanzas with stanzas in other texts of *Elder Green*.

15211	*Mississippi Bo Weavil Blues*
15222	*Tom Rushen Blues*
L-38	*Elder Greene Blues*
L-42	*Frankie And Albert*

L-59	*High Water Everywhere* - *Part 1*
L-60	*High Water Everywhere* - *Part 2*
L-77	*Mean Black Moan*
L-429	*Dry Well Blues*
14725	*High Sheriff Blues* (total of nine)

III. *Ragtime Songs*

These are characterised textually by nonsense verses (which can accordingly not be construed as either coherent or incoherent) referring to sexual matters. (Total of three.)

15223	*A Spoonful Blues*
15224	*Shake It and Break It But Don't Let It Fall Mama*
14758	*Hang It On The Wall*

IV. *Traditional Spirituals* or *Church Songs*

15225	*Prayer of Death* - *Part 1* (contains *Nearer My God To Thee* and *I'm Going Home*)
15225-A	*Prayer of Death* - *Part 2* (contains the *Singing Sermon* and *Hold To God's Unchanging Hand*)
15226	*Lord I'm Discouraged*
15227	*I'm Going Home*
L-51	*Some Happy Day*
L-52	*You're Gonna Need Somebody When You Die*
L-61	*Jesue Is A Dying-Bed Maker*
L-62	*I Shall Not Be Moved*
14749	*Oh Death* (with Bertha Lee)
14752	*Troubled 'Bout My Mother* (with Bertha Lee) (total of ten sides and twelve songs)

The following four unissued Vocalion sides also fit into this category:

14740 *I've Got A Mother Up In Kingdom*

14741 *Ananaias*

14748 *Oh Lord I'm In Your Hands*

14753 *God's Word Will Never Pass Away*

V. *Miscellaneous*

Songs which do not fit into any of the previous categories and which have been described as 'problematical'. (Total of four.)

L-37 *Going To Move To Alabama*

L-43 *Some These Days I'll Be Gone*

L-64 *Running Wild Blues*

14757 *Poor Me*

VI. *Sides which have not been made available to the author*

A. *Issued Paramount sides which have not been located*:

L-57 *Jim Lee Blues - Part 1*

L-77 *Joe Kirby*

Jim Lee Blues - Part 2 (Paramount 13133)

L-431 *Some Summer Day - Part 1*

B. *Unissued Vocalion secular songs*:

(Titles of unissued Paramount sides are not known.) An asterisk indicates the accompanying vocal of Bertha Lee. (Total of twelve.)

14724 *Charley Bradley's Ten Sixty-Six Blues*

14726 *Southern Whistle Blues**

14728 *My Man Blues**

14737 *You're Gonna Miss Me, Honey**

14738 *Stoop Down*

14742 *Listen What She Said**

14743 *Till The Day Is Done**

14744 *Black Cow Blues*

14754 *Bed Bugs And Snakes*

14755 *The Delta Murder*

14756 *Whiskey Distillery**

14759 *Move Your Trunk*

It will be seen from the above classification that among every secular category at least one title includes the word ‘blues’. More than half of the blues-ballads were thus labelled. Neither Patton nor the record companies attempted to categorise different types of songs as exactly as has been done in this book.

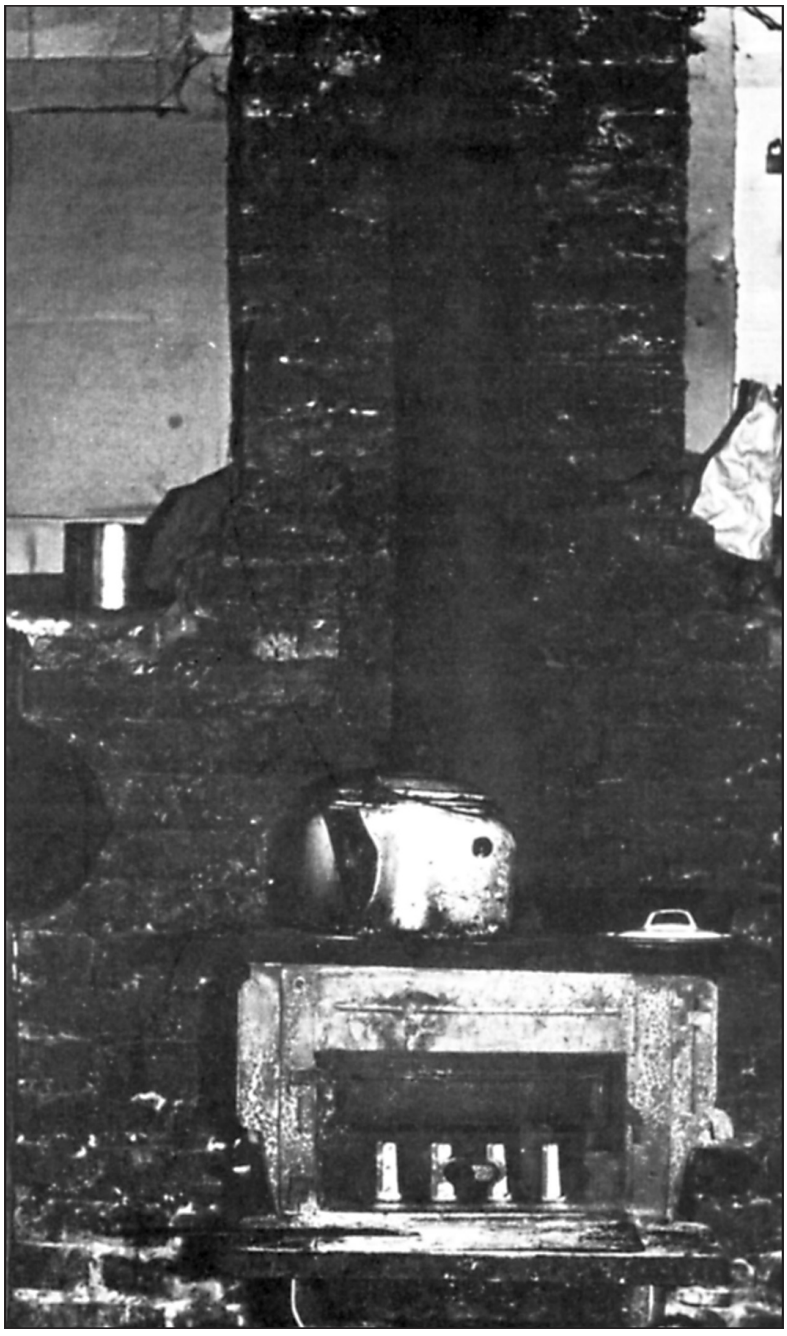
Charley Patton is often considered by record collectors of the older generation and by younger members of the ‘folkmusic revival’ to be the ‘best’ blues-singer whose recordings have come down to us; as the ‘best’ blues-singer who ever lived. This is an æsthetic judgement and to the extent to which æsthetic judgements have any significance or meaning, it may be a correct judgement if it is applied to Patton’s performances of blues-songs.

Patton, however, is more accurately described as a songster than as a blues-singer. He sang blues-songs, and perhaps he sang them ‘better’ than anyone else. Twenty recordings of them have come down to us.

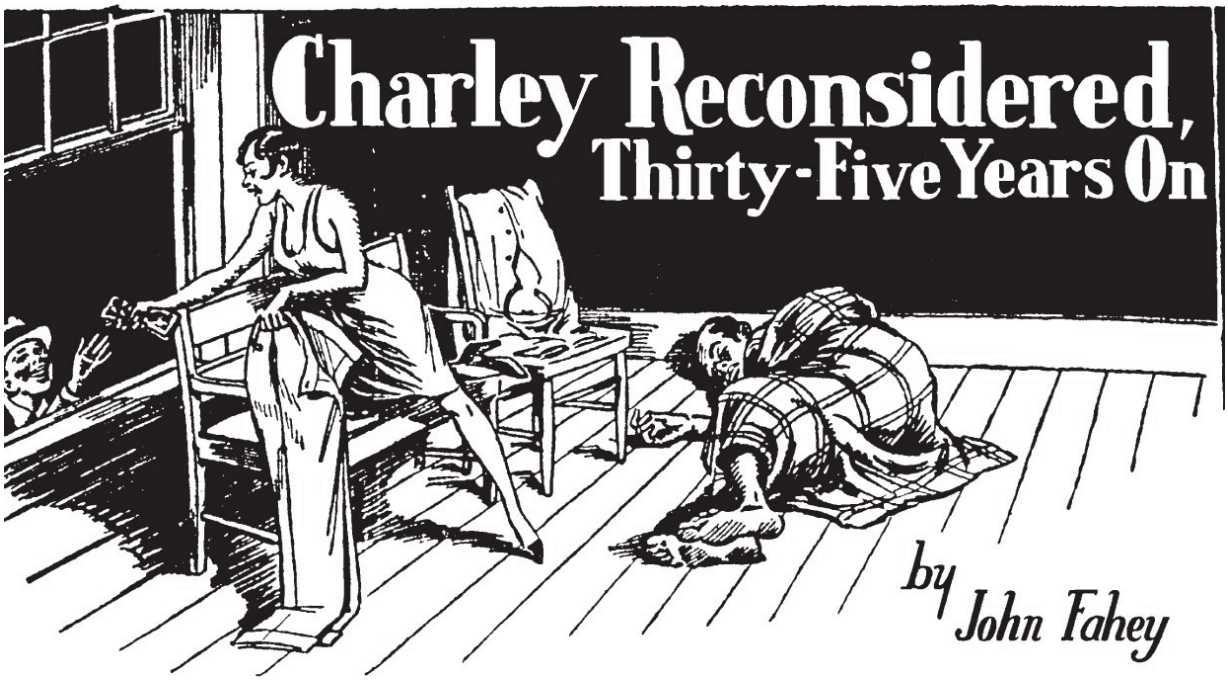
But he also recorded nine blues-ballads, three ragtime songs, and 14 sides of religious songs. Other singers such as Skip James and Blind Lemon Jefferson are more properly called ‘blues-singers’, since they recorded blues-songs almost to the exclusion of any other type of song. They recorded no blues-ballads. Son House, upon listening to several selections performed by Mississippi John Hurt (a songster) said, ‘Charley sang blues, but he could do that too. He could play just like that and he sang those same songs, John sings’.

Patton was the bearer of more than one musical tradition; he was instrumental in the development of what later became known as the ‘Country Blues’. But it was other singers such as Blind Lemon Jefferson, Leroy Carr, and Big Bill Broonzy, and the later, Chicago-oriented singers

such as Washboard Sam, who brought the ‘Country Blues’ to great popularity during the thirties and early forties.



A kitchen in Mississippi with a wood-fired stove



PART I:
A BRIEF REJOINDER

The plan of this piece is to make some inroads into Patton's personality, not only using Dr. David Evans' recent, invaluable study of the man,[1] but by pointing out a few somewhat obvious factors which nobody has discussed to date. I'll make some observations regarding Patton's lyrics, biography, religion and other matters but my central goal is to find out what drove this most mysterious man—this enigma who wore a mask, used pseudonyms, had many voices, many styles and, yes, many wives—this truly great musician and singer who was patently obsessed with death—the greatest blues singer I've ever heard who frequently denied being a secular singer of any sort and insisted he was really a preacher[2]—man of many personae—man of such charisma that he was enormously popular among blacks and whites and was still remembered more than fifty years after his death by former (white) sheriff's deputy Tom Rushing as "a good old boy,"[3]

a title rarely given by Mississippi whites of Rushing's vintage to blacks—this actor, hypnotist, clown, preacher, wealthy magician who nevertheless worked in medicine shows, frequently passing himself off as an illiterate farmer—who inspired the trust of Paramount Records in Grafton, WI to advance him sufficient funds to act as a talent scout for other musicians such as Willie Brown, Son House, Delta Big Four and Louise Johnson.

Evans, while discussing in his piece some of the ideas in my earlier Patton book[4] does admit that I have tried to be "factual rather than anecdotal." He also does criticize me for saying that "Patton did not have a particularly profound personality or sensitivity to the world around him. Patton was first and foremost an entertainer and had a limited picture of the world." Now, I did say these things. But my point here was that Patton sang almost exclusively about people and events in his own small neck of the woods. And this is true—read the lyrics enclosed herein and check out the map. I found it strange then and still find it strange now that Patton—who at the very least wanted to sell records and at most (according to Evans) had intentions of singing and playing all over the world, becoming a globally famous singer—that such a man would expect people outside of Mississippi to purchase a record called "Tom Rushen Blues," or "Joe Kirby," "Charley Bradley," or "Jim Lee" (the latter being a Mississippi riverboat). Patton thought that folks from China and Iceland would interest themselves in local, Delta goings-on. I agree with Evans that Patton, at least in his final session, did sing about himself as though it were the "news." And so, I cannot and do not dispute Evans. Patton certainly was a world class entertainer and there is evidence to indicate that he intended to become internationally known. Both things must be true, that Patton was ambitious and that Patton sang about a small, provincial, rural portion of the world. Let the tension stand. This *is* strange *and* very interesting.

Later Evans suggests that I thought Patton was stupid and had a very limited *weltanschauung*. Let me say this: I certainly wish that I had been a better writer when I wrote *Charley Patton* because I have always considered Patton to be:

(1) a very intelligent, complex, interesting and first class artist—certainly a world class artist;
(2) a true professional;
(3) a man who inspired many people's love and trust and respect (how many times did record companies hire blacks as talent scouts in

those days?), and a man therefore who was serious, a person of good character, someone whom many people found inspiring, including me;

(4) a leader of men;

(5) and most importantly from my point of view, a pioneer in the externalization through music of strange, weird, even ghastly emotional states.

And when I said "limited picture of the world" and "narrow view of the world" I was referring to geography and not his *weltanschauung*—about which I knew practically nothing at the time.

One more rejoinder to David Evans, my old friend and collaborator, regarding his long quotation[5] from my book:

> If we search Patton's lyrics for words expressive of profound sentiments directly caused by this particular cotton-economy, or for words expressing a desire to transcend this way of life, if we search for verses of great cultural significance depicting any historical trend or movement, or aspiration to improve "the lot of a people," we search in vain. Such a search would not be fruitful with any blues singers. Patton could, of course, only sing about his own limited experience. He had a very narrow view of the world. And there was perhaps no intellectual climate available to Patton for the development of significant thoughts or comments about his and his people's status.
>
> Patton was an *entertainer*, not a social prophet in any sense. He had no profound Message and was probably not very observant of the troubles of his own people. He was not a "noble savage." Least of all did he try to express the "aspirations of a folk." His lyrics are totally devoid of any protesting sentiments attacking the social or racial *status quo*.

At the time I wrote this I was fighting *zeitgeist* sentiments. My main points here were that:

(1) Patton was not a civil rights worker or political leader;

(2) Patton was not a social protester; and, most importantly,

(3) Patton's lyrics constitute a refutation of the Marxist interpretation of blues lyrics, class struggle, economic determinism, etc. This theory was widespread at the time I wrote the book, and I had been

> engaged, for many years, rhetorically attempting to destroy Marxism and Marxist interpretations of folk expression. I found these theories noxious and I still do. Now, of course, such theories are recognized as antiquated and fantastic.

I confess to using a bit of hyperbole in the service of making a point from time to time, and certainly that was the case in the passage from my book quoted above. So, to some extent, what I wrote lends itself fairly easily to misinterpretation. For this I assure you I am very sorry and hope that all of you will forgive me the (many) transgressions of my youth.

Most commentators on blues song lyrics make an unstated assumption. Evans makes this assumption in his Patton book. I did not make this assumption when I wrote my book. I shall now make it and, indeed, state it: Patton's lyrics are frequently autobiographical, and sometimes reported as "news." When I wrote my book, biographical information was so meager that I did not feel justified in making this assumption. Now, on the basis of Evans' research, I feel we have solid grounds for assuming this.

Later in his book, Evans divides the writers on Patton and his lyrics into two camps: those who find meaning in Patton's lyrics and those who do not. Now, I prefer order to chaos just like anybody else and would place myself firmly in the first camp. Nevertheless, I must say that I still do find Patton's lyrics, at times, shall I say "challenging?" I still find some of Patton's lyrics preposterous, incoherent, disjunctive poetry. My favorite example of these things is "Pony Blues"—Patton's biggest hit! [See lyric transcription in song notes portion, disc 1/track 1.]

It simply remains true that Patton had a tendency to change subjects abruptly in some songs, leaving us wondering what in the world Patton *meant*. Generally, and perhaps always, Charley did intend something, and below I shall posit the existence of certain streams of verbal significance in Patton's blues songs. I don't have all the keys but now I think I have most of them.

When I wrote my book I was thinking that in many songs, Patton could be seen in the act of lyric composition at the time of recording, and that he had an enormous fund of verses in his mind to draw upon. This has proven to be true in at least two cases pointed out by Evans, where we have the two takes of "Elder Greene," and what amounts to two takes of the same song in "Magnolia Blues" and "When Your Way Gets Dark." Patton was, in some songs, like an impressionistic painter using association. Verse X reminds

him of verse Y. But he does not tell us why. Thus I suggested that Patton was in touch with an endless stream of blues verses and on some songs grabbed segments without recognizing the verses in between the segments seemed nonsensical. But now I think I know the story of the stream and how we can now see in these difficult songs some sense and coherence. I'll come back to this later.

As I noted earlier, one must make the assumption of autobiography in some songs—since as Evans demonstrates conclusively, especially in his elucidation of "34 Blues"—Patton is singing autobiographically.

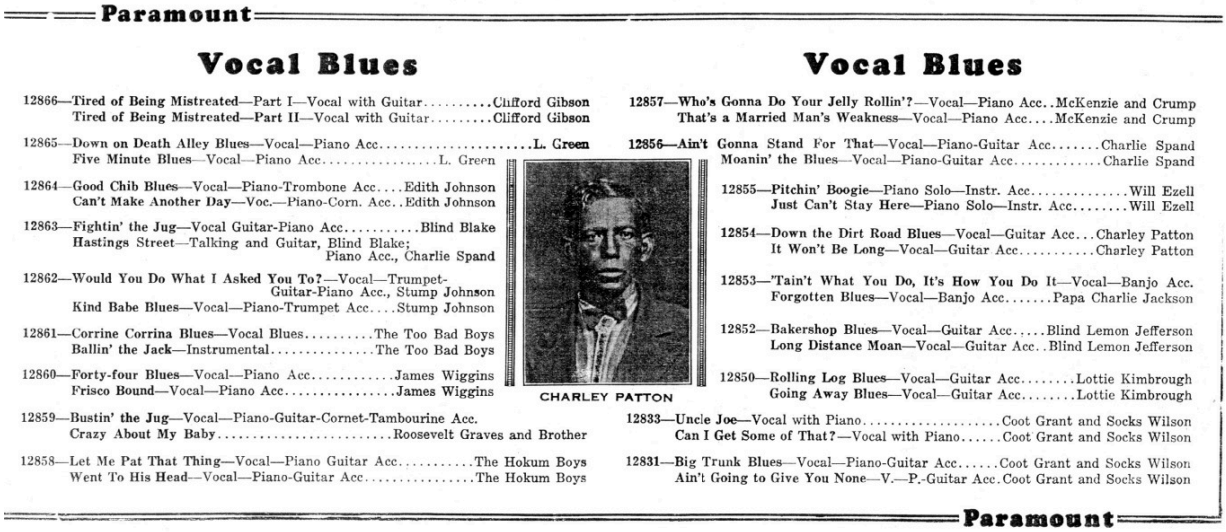
He composes a song critical of his enemy Mr. Jett; earlier he had made a laudatory record for Tom Rushing; some songs at his last sessions seem to be sung directly to his last wife and only relatively long-term relationship partner, Bertha Lee. Patton seems to have on occasion thought of his songs as "missives," sometimes personal, often meant to be humorous, sometimes like newspaper reporting—as in "High Water Everywhere, Part 1."

Now let me add another equally sensible assumption—sensible, but ultimately unprovable, unless we can agree we have a common understanding of music. I am going to posit that Patton's guitar playing and singing—disregarding for the time being the lyrics—are also to some extent autobiographical, usually evoking a mood or feeling in the listener which corresponds on occasion to the lyrics, or the "Blues Story," as I shall call it below.

Why would anyone want to examine only the lyrics? At the time that I wrote my book I felt and sensed that there was something in both the lyrics *and* music that was meaningful and could be described, but it was frequently expressed obliquely or enigmatically, and even though I found it mysterious and fascinating it lay beyond my powers of elucidation. Unfortunately, I had very little training in poetry or poetics.

Patton should certainly be seen primarily as an entertainer. This was his chosen occupation. But Patton was important, a genius, a hero, and was certainly very popular and widely admired during his lifetime. I admired him when I wrote the book and still do. Bukka White considered him a "great man," Pops Staples expressed similar sentiments, and I believe them. Nowhere then did I and nowhere now do I suggest that Patton's greatness is attributable only to his (considerable) entertainment value. And I am not a member of the school which prefers to regard Patton as a clown, ignoring his consummate professionalism. Let us note that Patton was always in

tune. Not one of his records displays an out-of-tune guitar. This is amazing in itself, as he so frequently used—and changed the position of—capos. Patton's right hand slide vibrato is sublime, accurate and fast as lightning. His ability to record so many songs in one session or on successive days is thoroughly professional and in fact virtually unprecedented among folk performers of his day. His continuing recreation of blues lyrics—as in the aforementioned “Magnolia Blues” and “Elder Greene” (the two versions of each display very different lyrics)—is truly revelatory. It seems that Patton's method of lyric composition was improvisatory and that his recombination of blues couplets, many of which were half, or all, commonplaces, was extremely deft. Perhaps Patton considered this method of “instant composition” (to use a nice phrase which is unfortunately eschewed by my esteemed colleague and noted improv authority Derek Bailey) an amusing and enjoyable process, wherein he would set up a situation in the first stanza and then have to come up with a resolution, and maybe sometimes he failed and that is the reason for the occasional lyric confusion. And each time he made a new take he felt compelled to think up a new resolution? This now seems entirely plausible and even likely.



Paramount

Vocal Blues

12866—**Tired of Being Mistreated**—Part I—Vocal with Guitar.....Clifford Gibson
Tired of Being Mistreated—Part II—Vocal with Guitar.....Clifford Gibson

12865—**Down on Death Alley Blues**—Vocal—Piano Acc.....L. Green
Five Minute Blues—Vocal—Piano Acc.....L. Green

12864—**Good Chib Blues**—Vocal—Piano-Trombone Acc....Edith Johnson
Can't Make Another Day—Voc.—Piano-Corn. Acc..Edith Johnson

12863—**Fightin' the Jug**—Vocal Guitar-Piano Acc.....Blind Blake
Hastings Street—Talking and Guitar, Blind Blake;
Piano Acc., Charlie Spand

12862—**Would You Do What I Asked You To?**—Vocal—Trumpet-
Guitar-Piano Acc., Stump Johnson
Kind Babe Blues—Vocal—Piano-Trumpet Acc....Stump Johnson

12861—**Corrine Corrina Blues**—Vocal Blues.....The Too Bad Boys
Ballin' the Jack—Instrumental.....The Too Bad Boys

12860—**Forty-four Blues**—Vocal—Piano Acc.....James Wiggins
Frisco Bound—Vocal—Piano Acc.....James Wiggins

12859—**Bustin' the Jug**—Vocal—Piano-Guitar-Cornet-Tambourine Acc.
Crazy About My Baby.....Roosevelt Graves and Brother

12858—**Let Me Pat That Thing**—Vocal—Piano Guitar Acc.....The Hokum Boys
Went To His Head—Vocal—Piano-Guitar Acc.....The Hokum Boys

CHARLEY PATTON

Vocal Blues

12857—**Who's Gonna Do Your Jelly Rollin'?**—Vocal—Piano Acc..McKenzie and Crump
That's a Married Man's Weakness—Vocal—Piano Acc....McKenzie and Crump

12856—**Ain't Gonna Stand For That**—Vocal—Piano-Guitar Acc.....Charlie Spand
Moanin' the Blues—Vocal—Piano-Guitar Acc.....Charlie Spand

12855—**Pitchin' Boogie**—Piano Solo—Instr. Acc.....Will Ezell
Just Can't Stay Here—Piano Solo—Instr. Acc.....Will Ezell

12854—**Down the Dirt Road Blues**—Vocal—Guitar Acc...Charley Patton
It Won't Be Long—Vocal—Guitar Acc.....Charley Patton

12853—**'Tain't What You Do, It's How You Do It**—Vocal—Banjo Acc.
Forgotten Blues—Vocal—Banjo Acc.....Papa Charlie Jackson

12852—**Bakershop Blues**—Vocal—Guitar Acc.....Blind Lemon Jefferson
Long Distance Moan—Vocal—Guitar Acc..Blind Lemon Jefferson

12850—**Rolling Log Blues**—Vocal—Guitar Acc.....Lottie Kimbrough
Going Away Blues—Vocal—Guitar Acc.....Lottie Kimbrough

12833—**Uncle Joe**—Vocal with Piano.....Coot Grant and Socks Wilson
Can I Get Some of That?—Vocal with Piano.....Coot Grant and Socks Wilson

12831—**Big Trunk Blues**—Vocal—Piano-Guitar Acc.....Coot Grant and Socks Wilson
Ain't Going to Give You None—V.—P.-Guitar Acc.Coot Grant and Socks Wilson

Paramount

Let us examine Patton's consummate musicianship in the case of Patton's *tour de force*, “Spoonful.”[6] Here Patton simultaneously and compellingly—without ever making a single mistake—plays extraordinary guitar in ragtime progressions with a steel in open D tuning—and plays it fast and with ease while he keeps singing (in tune always) an incredible

number of words per second—the only example quite like this of which I am aware—a truly mesmerizing performance—in many different voices: women, children, men, sometimes himself as narrator, improvising riotous lyrics about cocaine, murder, sometimes using double entendre and sometimes not—and on and on without ever getting mixed up or missing a beat, or singing a wrong note, or singing confusing lyrics. The song sounds like there are 20 or 30 people on it. “Down the Dirt Road Blues” was the first song I heard where Patton used different voices in his spoken asides. For years I thought there were 5 or 6 different commentators on this record.

I've never heard anyone succeed in doing this so spectacularly. At the other end of the spectrum, one might compare Patton’s effort with that of Too Tight Henry on “Charleston Contest, Parts 1 and 2” (Co. 14374, rec. Atlanta 10/27/28) wherein the singer attempts to imitate a conversation involving only two people and gets hopelessly mixed up and simply can't pull it off. And the guitar accompaniment is atonally insane—a true case of playing random chords on the guitar. I am genuinely surprised that this coo-coo record was ever issued.

Patton pulls out all his tricks on “Spoonful” and doesn't get confused for even a second. He never sounds labored, either. Such perfection while multi-tasking with such rapidity clearly indicates that Patton was not wired like the rest of us, but had an extremely complex, versatile and robust nervous system, a quick mind, and a very high IQ. This performance should be examined by a neurologist. Prodigious!

PART II: CHARLEY PATTON: PILGRIM OF THE OMINOUS

David Evans does a great job of describing what exactly is so great about a Patton performance. Patton's sense of timing and syncopation are prodigious and unexcelled, but it is Patton's ability to sing and perform with a projection of "absolute conviction" and to "plumb the depths of feeling," and ultimately to (I will argue) tap into the unconscious, that places Patton at the top of his class. He was overwhelmingly intense on all his Paramount recordings, regardless of genre. (I will discuss the ARC sessions separately.)

The late musician and writer Robert Palmer called the feeling which Patton conveys "deep blues."[7] Now this is an interesting, curt poetic description. But it seems to have been used in sort of a throwaway fashion and does not tell us very much. Let's try to get at this "depth" of blues and attempt to nail it down with some precision.

Now, usually when a person is described as "deep" (or "heavy," God forbid), we mean that such person is in touch and conversant with knowledge, perhaps, but certainly with feelings, emotions, to a greater extent than the rest of us. A "deep" person does not engage much in small talk. He is not nervous, and is certainly not trivial. He knows things that we do not. He knows himself. He is in touch with his unconscious feelings and inclinations and he is neither cut off from (disassociation) nor afraid of them.

My favorite formulation for this kind of person is that "his unconscious is open." It is not hidden from himself or from me. Furthermore, someone with this highly developed consciousness knows more about other people—knows more about you, in fact—than you do because he recognizes that we are all subject to the same drives and your unconscious is not so different from his.

In another context, Palmer mentions Patton's "lingering rage."[8] Yes, Palmer understands Patton on some level much better than most other writers do. Patton was indeed a master in his blues songs at externalizing inner, and for the most part socially unacceptable, emotions. Very strong emotions. I don't know to what extent Patton was aware of these feelings while *not* playing music. But I do know that he presents the unacceptable to us in an acceptable manner—in music. Later, jazz composer Stan Kenton would do the same.

We are about to embark on a journey through dark and frightening waters in which many things which seem to be one thing are in fact another. We are going to meet some scary characters. Ghosts. Vampires. Wraiths. "Monsters from the Id" (which we met in the film *Forbidden Planet*), but also monsters from the superego. Shortly after I wrote *Charley Patton*, I went into orthodox Freudian psychoanalysis. It was an eight year journey but it was by far the most exciting trip I ever took. And I'm still taking it. Nothing is more interesting than a trip into the unconscious. Other people become more interesting, and understandable. Before I got into psychoanalysis, I could not name this primary emotion—anger—which is so prevalent in Patton's music. I couldn't name it because I had not yet come into acquaintance with the rage within myself—and the events which caused it.[9]

So, yes. Palmer has made an advance and so have I. Patton almost always sounds angry except on some ragtime songs. When he sounds sad and down and out you can still hear and feel the anger and hate. It never goes away. It appears to be Patton's primary personality constituent. But, hell, we could also say the same thing about Robert Johnson, Son House, Skip James (although very very repressed, in the case of the latter). I am not denigrating the significance of this "seething anger,"[10] as Palmer calls it, to Patton the man and to his music. It is there and it is important. Agreed. But there is more that makes Patton's music so compelling and at times even frightening.

Patton in his lyrics continuously and openly states that he is being controlled more and more by forces outside himself, such as women, trains, the fates, prison, the Law, even those strange, ambivalent feelings which seek to control him when he thinks about his mother. And travel. He is always singing about escape routes from these controlling forces:

» Every day seems like murder here.
» The blues come down like showers of rain.
» Trains, trains and more trains (usually associated with women from whom he wants to escape).
» Discouragement (depression).
» Cornered by mean black cats.
» Enormous rivers (impediments to motion, so unrelenting that CP must stop, sit down, and meditate on one of them).
» Train whistles, bells and other RR paraphernalia.
» Mean black moans assailing him from outside his door.
» Death and omens of death, as in first stanza of Hammer Blues; is CP singing about a hammock or a coffin? In what other condition could Patton be, such that leaves fall all over him? Dead.
» Shackles, balls and chains, prisons, Parchman Farm.
» He goes to the station, but the train has left. Too late. Trapped.
» Stuck with some woman who has a heart like RR steel.
» AND religion, the ultimate escape, which he senses is really just death.

There are indeed large blocks of religious songs, in fact, sung with, as Evans says, “absolute conviction.” Patton even composes his own hymns.[11] Patton is trapped in his body with his rheumatic heart on this forbidding planet. He says so over and over again in his religious songs. “Some happy day, from sin set free,” living in Heaven with angels and other Christian emblems. Again, floods prevent him from moving. “Jesue is a Dying-Bed Maker” is positively morbid lyrically: cooling board, caskets, wakes, and the Heavenly journey.

In some songs which I shall delineate below as versions of the “Pimp Song” Patton brags about his way of life. “I ain't gonna have no hard times, mama, rolling through this world.” This commonplace is an essential part of the Pimp Song. But if we look for other verses indicative of a happy Patton, other evidence that he is having fun here on earth, that Patton is hedonistically or in any other sense “enjoying life,” we look in vain. Patton, of course, had the heart condition and knew from a young age that he would not live long. (Although he certainly sounds healthy on those Paramount sides….) Perhaps he didn't like the waiting and wanted to simply get it over with. I don't know. But in any case, and in spite of the many compliments

people and relatives and blues colleagues paid him—Patton's opinion of this world is that it's a big gyp, a waste of time, a vale of tears *and he just can't wait* to get to the next one.

The only time Patton sounds genuinely happy, if not ecstatic, is when he sings religious songs such as "I Shall Not Be Moved," "Dying-Bed Maker," "You're Gonna Need Somebody," "Some Happy Day," and a few others. Patton is certainly no *Earthling*.[12]

But we still have not grappled with the secret emotion that lurks ever-presently beneath all the others. Something which has a specific resonance in Patton's everyday life. What Patton portrays brilliantly, both in words and music, more than any other musician is the *uncanny* feeling that comes only gradually to consciousness that the real forces controlling him are in fact not forces *outside* himself, but dimly beheld, obscure "jinxes" or ominous feelings which hang over him and cloud his thoughts like a pall.[13]

What is the significance of the fact that Charley Patton is known to have had at least eight wives? Is it Patton's central hubris, his fatal flaw, that puts him back on the treadmill again and again? In psychoanalytic theory it is known as the "wrong love-object choice." Patton believes he can live with one of these church women and be happy, but in fact he cannot. There is something, some fetish, some characteristic of his mother that Patton thinks he will find again and again, but he doesn't, of course (until he meets Bertha Lee, but I am anticipating).

Charley Patton was clearly obsessed with death. Both attracted to it and afraid of it. Patton recorded a larger percentage of religious songs than any other blues singer-songster (ah, those beautiful caskets!). On the first day at his recording session Patton recorded a guitar-vocal imitation of a church service. But he called it "Prayer of Death" in two parts. What is the meaning of this? There is no office or sacrament in any church that I know of called the "Prayer of Death." This title and concept came from Patton and only Patton. There is nothing extraordinary or unusual on these records except the title. True, Patton quotes St. Paul: "Yes, the wages of sin are death / The gift of God, eternal life," but these words are among the most familiar in the Bible to Christians of all denominations. Why did Patton call this record his "Prayer of Death?"

Patton, already during his first sessions, knew he was going to die and it wasn't going to be long. Death images abound in Patton's songs. Although I firmly believe that Patton later became relatively happy and died happy,

morbid thought consumed him for most of his life. While it is true that “It Won't Be Long” is the king of the Pimp Song, the aura of this record is more dark and obscure and alien than anything I have heard. I can understand emotionally Blind Willie Johnson's “Dark Was the Night, Cold Was the Ground” (Co. 14303-D, rec. Dallas 12/3/27), but Patton's song is haunted by horrible spectres, demons coursing through an underworld; it's as if one were walking down a sunny side of the street only to come upon the ghastly world of Kupka's *Resistance—The Black Idol* or Kubin's *The Way to Hell*. Even Böcklin's *The Isle of the Dead* is tame compared to the aura of Patton's uncanny song.

In this song, CP goes deeply into the ominous. Fortunately, this incredible, unspeakable mood did not stay with Patton long. What then, is the ominous? This category for which I claim master status for Patton is the terrible anticipation that something unnamed yet familiar is going to happen to you; something which hasn't happened yet, but which in fact *feels* inevitable. It is the fear of Death, of castration, of separation from the superego. It is also fear *of* the superego which one imagines to be outside of oneself. It is fear of the inevitable, the future, fate, divine retribution and God knows what else.

But above all, it is the fear of something unknown within oneself—something that is controlling you, over and over again, naggingly familiarly each time, in the same manner but such that any attempt to escape it results in simply being the shortest path to that very same terrible thing. The Bullwhip, the endless religious talk and concern, the fear of and certainty about early death, and finally and most alarmingly the Repetition Compulsion, the ultimate trap from which Patton has learned there is no escape.

Patton sees these omens everywhere and he is certain that this incomprehensible predicament will be with him until his early death.

Fortunately, Patton was wrong. Patton had one final substantial portion of good luck: he got off the treadmill, stopped seeing omens, but also, by the time he got to his ARC recording sessions in 1934, he could no longer feel or sing ominously. There are the superficial trappings of the ominous in these late recordings, but Patton had been singing these verses for some time and it's only natural that they recur, however toothless they are rendered at this stage. But by 1934, Patton can clearly no longer sing angry, ominous blues songs convincingly.

I personally believe he had simply forfeited the obsessions which drove him to such heights. It was not just a manifestation of physical decline—for he had long been ill, yet through the unspeakable tensions that gripped him he had scaled mountains in terms of raw, transcendent performance—but of a surrender against these psychic tensions; the uncanny, the ominous simply evaporated from his psyche and his art.

PART III: THE BLUES STORY AND THE RELIGION OF CHARLEY PATTON

The following theory was developed on a series of long drives, probably 40 years ago or so, with Charlie Huber. Huber put it like this: All blues lyrics have the same story behind them, either explicit or implicit. The blues lyrics are the obverse side of the typical Rev. Gates or Rev. Nix Christian sermon records. Obverse, not opposite—not even in disagreement with, but rather the very same thing from another point of view.

With rare exceptions (such as Son House's “Preachin' the Blues,” and some quasi-blasphemous songs like The Beale Street Sheiks' “You Shall” which makes fun of preachers, not Christianity, and some unissued tracks like Bessie Jackson's alternate version of “Shave ’Em Dry”), blues lyrics are in complete agreement with Christian values as expressed on preachin' records and in endless Sunday sermons, but simply take a different angle. They have a message and a story and a (not so) hidden sermon. The message is this: I didn't do what the Bible (or preacher, or mother or father) said and now I'm really in trouble. The implication is: Religion is true. Better pay attention or you'll end up like me.

The Blues Story was widely circulated on all those early female city blues singers' records, such as Bessie, Clara and Mamie Smith, Lucille Hegamin, Victoria Spivey, et al. and this story was carried over into the country blues lyrics by rural folk like Patton. The prototype: “Oh, moan, moan, I didn't do what the church and my family—above all my mother—said was right. I left home and went to the Big City and got in with the wrong crowd and started leading a sinful life (usually involving sex and/or booze) and even though I know that my life is evil and wrong, something makes me stay here and keep living thisaway. If I could, I would return

home to the arms of Mother and the church and like the prodigal son repent and live the good, true Christian life. But I can't."

This is to be contrasted with the Pimp Song, as partially described earlier. The Pimp Song starts off with the Blues Story and stops in the middle to insist that the blues singer likes his life as sinner and brags about his prowess with women and how much money he has and what fun it all is. As mentioned above, Patton's "It Won't Be Long" is an example.

The success of the Blues Story song depends upon:

(1) originality and humor, irony, symbolism, in the telling of the story; and

(2) the apparent authenticity of the lyrics, i.e., how convincing it is that the singer actually experienced the things about which he sings. It's personal! (And even though everybody knows that the particular words of this or that song are contrived, *the story is always true*.)

If there is a departure from the Blues Story song, such as in the Pimp Song, it must be interesting and amusing, especially in its symbolic elements. The bragging must be either gross, as in, "I'm a man, MAN" or "I Love the Life I Live" (both Muddy Waters) or in Patton's "It Won't Be Long," which dictates: My woman is not merely a whore. She is a madame. She's got a man on a man and a kid on a kid. She takes care of everything I need or want. And that makes me not just a pimp, but the king of pimps.

Other departures exist, but I believe that the Pimp Song is the most noteworthy and most common. The Blues Story is frequently implicit, and always assumed and the lyrics may simply be about anything that could happen to someone "out there in the mean old world." As a result, the values of Christianity are never challenged. The Story does in fact contain an implicit sermon.

And that is why, when David Evans and Al Wilson and I located the by-then-Reverend Rubin Lacy (an ex-blues singer from the Delta and, as Bukka White and Son House indicated to me, the only Delta singer comparable to Patton in musicianship and popularity during his time) and asked him what he thought about the blues, he said, "The Blues are true and the Truth shall set you free,"[14] and furthermore preached a sermon to his congregation in Ridgecrest, California, that night on precisely this subject.

Rev. Lacy and his wife were singular in the clarity and exposition of their "ultimate concern" (Kierkegaard). They were thoroughly Pauline and Lutheran in their theology and they had no trouble at all in distinguishing

their thoroughgoing antinomianism from the confused theology of so many other preachers who spend countless hours talking about sin in an attempt to get people to come to church to be "saved." "I don't preach that way. I tell them the truth,"[15] said Lacy.

Writers like Stephen Calt perceive Patton as a religious hypocrite because he performed sacred material while he himself did not attempt to lead a pious life.[16] These perceived character weaknesses fit neatly into the less than flattering personal portrait of Patton portrayed in Calt's writings, as described in some detail by Evans herein. In contrast, Rev. Lacy, who knew Patton and liked him (noting he was a man with a "good record—a nice guy"[17]), never expressed any concern over Patton's understanding of this kind of antinomianist view of Salvation. Referring to Patton and other bluesmen he had known, Lacy told me, "Oh, they all believed, and they all knew the truth about the Gospel. I'm not worried about any of them. I'm sure I will see them again."[18]

Again, Lacy's and his wife's theology was thoroughly Pauline and Lutheran. Now, when I say "Lutheran" I am referring to Martin Luther's writings and not to the contemporary Lutheran Church. A brief explanation of what I'm talking about: there are two main theories of Christian Salvation: The first can be called the "certainty of Salvation," in which the sinner, no doubt under the influence of Grace, comes to repent and asks Jesus to accept him as a disciple and save him from Hell according to Jesus' merits. In the crucifixion, Jesus paid our "sin debt" past, present and future. He thus saved us from the wrath of the Father, which we all deserve.

It is absolutely essential that the sinner ask Jesus to incorporate him into his substitutionary sacrifice. There is never a negative answer given. Having done this (the "sinner's prayer" is frequently used), the Holy Spirit enters you permanently, and while you may not feel any different, you may be absolutely certain that you are saved once and for all and that no matter what you do in the future, you are and always will be saved. Thus, sin becomes only one thing: unbelief. A morbid preoccupation with one's "sins" is not advised because these are being taken care of by the Holy Ghost who is informing and convicting your conscience and fighting sin for you.

In the second theory of Salvation, once you have been saved, you may lose your salvation through backsliding. Thus, you must continuously

introspect and try to “attain merit.” This is the Orthodox, Catholic and Anglican teaching. There is no certainty of Salvation here.

I could discuss the implications of these theories, and bring some friends like Dr. Charles Stanley, Jimmy Swaggart and Dr. Jerry Falwell into the equation, but we are already far afield of our subject here. My point is that Rev. Lacy was clearly aware of these two different theories and adamantly subscribed and preached to the “good news” of the first, and rejected outright the second. Thus, Lacy said that he would still play and sing the blues if he could, but his arthritis prevented him. He also said that although he didn't drink, he didn't do so not because he thought drinking would send him to Hell—nothing could do that, so long as he was Saved—but because he was afraid of influencing his congregation to their detriment—some folks could get hooked, you know.

Now, Evans is quite right in remarking that religious songs were an integral part of Patton's performance repertoire and that Christianity was important to Patton. Patton definitely considered himself a Christian and a permanently Saved one at that. Since he felt assured of Salvation he must have had a conversion experience at some point in his life—must have responded to an “altar call” of some sort. We cannot know under what circumstances CP's altar call took place, but I believe we can be certain it did in fact take place. Since Patton, like Martin Luther, had no fear of sins—the only sin being unbelief—he probably considered the preachin' records by Revs. Gates and Nix to be ill-informed and fundamentally incorrect because they trotted out standard notions of backsliding into sin.

Paul Oliver, in *Songsters and Saints*,[19] asks, “How sincere, then, were the recordings of religious songs by songsters and blues singers?” And even though he acknowledges that Patton made more religious sides than any other bluesman-songster and that Patton sounds like he meant it, man, there is no discussion of what it is that Patton actually meant. There is no discussion of what it is that these singers may have, or may not have, been sincere about. This likely reflects a confusion present in the records themselves, and perhaps a lack of knowledge regarding the history of Christian thought.

Lacy was not confused. And, I submit, neither was Patton. Evans correctly points out that “none of [Patton's] recorded Spirituals contain denunciation of various sins.” Evans goes on to say that Patton “would have

considered it hypocritical to denounce drinking, fornicating, dancing and other sins."[20]

It seems obvious to me that while Evans may be right, the primary reason for Patton's attitudes on these subjects, both on record and in life, was his recognition that for one who was Saved, who has certainty of his Salvation, there is no backsliding, no true sin, other than unbelief.

Primarily as a result of David Evans' dogged research, we can now pierce the veil of the Masked Marvel a bit, name that which hitherto could not be named, and say some fairly definitive things about Charley Patton, about whom so many of us have wondered while returning to play Patton's otherworldly, prodigious, deep recordings, again and again, and again.

Patton's recordings have meant so much to me for so long it is almost as if he were a constant companion to me. I find myself fervently hoping that he was right about the comfy spot awaiting him in the Heaven which he eagerly envisioned for most of his troubled life.

NOTES

1 See Evans' "Charley Patton: The Conscience of the Delta" in *The Voice of the Delta: Charley Patton and the Mississippi Blues Tradition*, an international symposium, edited by Robert Sacré (Presses Universitaires: Liege, Belgium, 1987).

2 Recollection of personal conversations with Stephen Calt between 1965 and 1975; also supported by recollections of Rev. Booker T. Miller, as captured on tape by Gayle Wardlow.

3 From personal correspondence with a man who interviewed Rushing and sent me a picture of him.

4 *Charley Patton* (Studio Vista Press: London, 1970).

5 Evans, p. 117.

6 "Spoonful" is a cocaine song—referring to the cocaine spoon, a small instrument from which cocaine is snorted—although, as in so much black double entendre, the meaning seems somewhat inconsistent as the song progresses and other subjects are introduced—sex, murder, etc. Perhaps the spoonful simply represents all those things which can drive a person to do things he would not otherwise consider. Somebody could write a thesis on this alone. I leave you to it. In any case, whether Patton was familiar with cocaine, certainly a more "urban" drug during this period, or even knew the meaning of "spoonful," is unknown. There is no evidence that Patton used narcotics. The most recent research shows that while Patton drank liquor, he did not drink to excess. Patton's recordings reflect consummate professionalism in the studio, at least.

7 Evans, p. 160.

8 Ibid., p. 115.

9 Further explicated in John Fahey, *How Bluegrass Music Destroyed My Life* (Drag City Press: Chicago, 2000).

10 Evans, p. 115.

11 Ibid., pp. 138-9.

12 Simone Weil.

13 See, in particular, Sigmund Freud, “Das Unheimliche,” *IMAGO* Vol. 5 (1919), nos. 5-6, pp. 297-324. Translated by Alix Strachey under the title “The ‘Uncanny,’” *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogarth, 1953-55), v. 17, pp. 217-52.

14 Recollection of various personal conversations with Lacy and his wife on field trips to Ridgecrest, CA, with David Evans and Al Wilson. I don’t believe any of our personal theological conversations are on tape.

15 Ibid.

16 Recollection of personal conversations with Stephen Calt between 1965 and 1975.

17 Reverend Rubin Lacy, interviewed by David Evans, John Fahey and Alan Wilson, Ridgecrest, CA, March 19, 1966.

18 See endnote 14, *supra*.

19 Paul Oliver, *Songsters and Saints: Vocal Traditions on Race Records* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, England, 1984), pp. 203-4.

20 Evans, p. 138.

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
VITAL RECORDS

34-6643

MISSISSIPPI STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

Bureau of Vital Statistics

STATE FILE NO. 6643

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

N. B. WRITE PLAINLY, WITH UNFADING INK—THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD. Every item of information should be carefully supplied. AGE should be stated EXACTLY. PHYSICIANS should state CAUSE OF DEATH in plain terms, so that it may be properly classified. Exact statement of OCCUPATION is very important. See instructions on back of certificate.

1 PLACE OF DEATH
County Sunflower State _____ Registration District No. 840 File No. _____
Village _____ Vot. Pct. _____ or Primary Registration Dist. No. _____ Reg. No. _____
City _____ No. _____ St., _____ Ward
(If death occurred in a hospital or institution, give its NAME instead of street and number.)

2 FULL NAME Chas Patton (Charlie Patton)

(a) Residence No. 356 St., Heathman Ward, _____
(Usual place of abode) (If non-resident give city or town and state.)

Length of residence in city or town where death occurred yrs. mos. ds. How long in U. S. if of foreign birth? yrs. mos. ds.

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS

3 SEX: M
4 COLOR OR RACE: Ok Negro
5 SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED or DIVORCED (write the word): Married
5a If married, widowed, or divorced HUSBAND of (or WIFE of): W H
6 DATE OF BIRTH (month, day and year)
7 AGE: YEARS 44 | MONTHS | DAYS | If LESS than 1 day, ___ hrs. or ___ min.
8 OCCUPATION OF DECEASED
(a) Trade, profession, or particular kind of work: Farmer
(b) General nature of Industry, business, or establishment in which employed (or employer)
(c) Name of employer
4-1934
9 BIRTHPLACE (city or town) (State or country)

PARENTS
10 NAME OF FATHER: Bill Patton
11 BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (city or town) (State or country): Hinds Co
12 MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER: Amy Patton
13 BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (city or town) (State or country): Hinds Co

14 Informant: Willie Calvin
(Address): Heathman

15 Filed 4-24, 1934 Dallye Potter REGISTRAR

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

16 DATE OF DEATH (Month, day and year): 4/19/34

17. I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended the deceased from 4/17, 1934, to 4/20, 1934, that I last saw h[illegible] alive on 4/20, 1934, and that death occurred on the date stated above, at ___ m.
The CAUSE OF DEATH* was as follows:

Mitral Valve Lesion
121

_____ (duration) ___ yrs. ___ mos. ___ ds.
CONTRIBUTORY (Secondary)
_____ (duration) ___ yrs. ___ mos. ___ ds.

18 Where was disease contracted if not at place of death?
Did an operation precede death? _____ Date of _____
Was there an autopsy?
What test confirmed diagnosis?
Signed R. B. Campbell M. D.
_____ 19 ___ (Address) Indianola Miss

*State the Disease Causing Death, or in deaths from Violent Causes state (1) Means and Nature of Injury, and (2) whether Accidental, Suicidal, or Homicidal. (See reverse side for additional space.)

19 Place of Burial, Cremation or Removal: Central Burial Ass
Date of Burial 19
UNDERTAKER: [illegible]
ADDRESS

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE IS A TRUE AND CORRECT COPY OF THE CERTIFICATE ON FILE IN THIS OFFICE

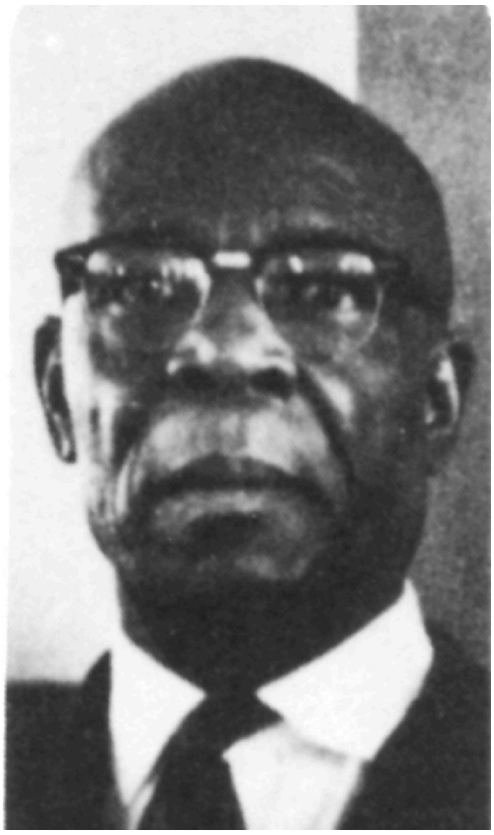
F. E. Thompson Jr. MD
F. E. Thompson, Jr., M.D., M.P.H.
STATE HEALTH OFFICER

Nita Cox Gunter
Nita Cox Gunter
STATE REGISTRAR

NOV-4 97

WARNING: A REPRODUCTION OF THIS DOCUMENT RENDERS IT VOID AND INVALID. DO NOT ACCEPT UNLESS EMBOSSED SEAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI STATE BOARD OF HEALTH IS PRESENT. IT IS ILLEGAL TO ALTER OR COUNTERFEIT THIS DOCUMENT.

THE FACE OF THIS DOCUMENT HAS A COLORED BACKGROUND ON WHITE PAPER. THIS IS WATERMARKED PAPER. DO NOT ACCEPT WITHOUT FIRST HOLDING TO LIGHT TO VERIFY WATERMARK.



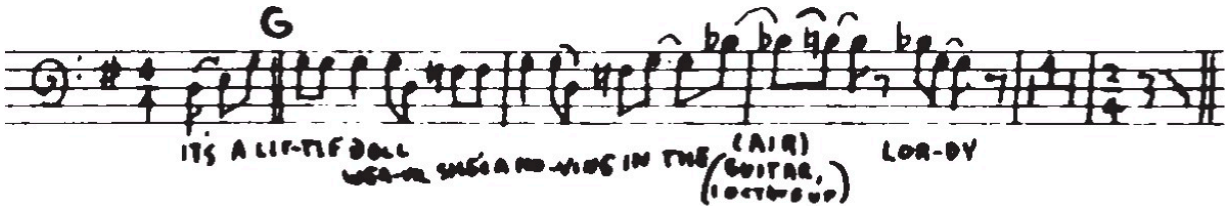
“Patton was a nice guy. I know I'll see him again.”
The Rev. Ruben Lacy in the 1960s. (courtesy Revenant Archives)

APPENDIX: TEXTS AND TRANSCRIPTIONS

No references are made to commonplaces such as ‘worried now but I won’t be worried long.’ Phonetic departures from correct spelling such as ‘gwine’, ‘Louisianaerrr’, and ‘gon’ are made in cases where Patton’s pronunciation renders certain verses almost unintelligible. Parentheses indicate that the word within them is not sung, or spoken; that it is a word which occurs in a traditional verse, with which Patton assumes the listener to be familiar.

15211 ***Mississippi Bo Weavil Blues*** Pm 12805

1. It’s a little bo weevil, she’s moving in the (air), Lordy.
   You can plant your cotton and you won’t get a half a cent, Lordy.



2. Bo Weevil, Bo Weevil, where’s your little home, Lordy?
   ‘A’ Louisianerrr [sic] and Texas is where I’s bred and born,’ Lordy.
3. Well, I saw the bo weevil, Lord, a’ circle, Lordy, in the air, Lordy.
   Next time I seen him, Lord, he had his family there, Lordy.
4. Bo weevil left Texas, Lord, he bid me ‘fare ye well,’ Lordy.
   Spoken: Where you gwine now?
   ‘I’m going down to Mississippi, going to give Louisiana hell, Lordy.’
5. Bo weevil said to the farmer, ‘Ain’t going to treat you fair,’ Lordy.
   Spoken: How is that boy?
   Took all the blossoms and he leave you an empty square, Lordy.
   And next time I seen him you had your family there, Lordy.
6. Bo weevil and his wife went and sit down on the hill, Lordy.
   Bo weevil told his wife, ‘Let’s take this forty in, Lordy.’
7. Bo weevil told his wife, ‘I believe I may go north,’ Lordy.
   Spoken: Boy, I’m goin’ to tell all about it.
   Let’s leavin’ Louisianaerrr [sic] and go to Arkansas.

8. Well I saw the bo weevil, Lord, a' circle, Lord, in the air, Lordy.
   Next time I seen him, Lord, he had his family there, Lordy.

9. Bo weevil told the farmer that 'I ain't going to treat you fair,' Lordy.
   Took all the blossoms and leave you an empty square, Lordy.

10. Bo weevil, bo weevil, where your little home, Lordy?
    'Most anywhere they' raisin' cotton and corn,' Lordy.

11. Bo weevil, bo weevil, call that treating me fair? Lordy.
    Next time I seen you, you had your family there, Lordy.

See G. Malcolm Laws, Jr., *Native American Balladry* (Philadelphia, 1964), I, 17.

15214 ***Screamin' and Hollerin' The Blues*** Pm 12805

1. Jackson on a high hill, Mama, Natchez just below. (2)
   Spoken: Some days you know they are.
   I ever get back home, I won't be back no more.

2. Oh, my mama's getting old, her head is turning grey.
   My mother's getting old, head is turning grey.
   Don't you know it'll break her heart, know I'm living this-a-way.

3. I woke up in the morning, jinx all 'round your bed.
   If I woke up in the morning, jinx all 'round your bed.
   Spoken: I know (?), baby.
   Turned my face to the wall and I, didn't have a word to say.

4. No use a-hollering, no use screamin' and cryin'.
   No use of hollering, no use o' screamin' and cryin'.
   For you know you got a home, Mama, long as I got mine.

5. Hey, Lord have mercy, on my wicked soul.
   Oh, Lord have mercy, on my wicked soul.
   Spoken: Baby, you know I ain't going to mistreat you.

I wouldn't mistreat you, Baby, for my weight in gold.

6. Oh, I'm going away, Baby, don't you want to go?
I'm going away, Sweet Mama, don't you want to go?
Spoken: I know you want to go, Baby.
Take God to tell when I'll, be back here anymore.

DISCOGRAPHY: stanza 4-3: Texas Alexander, OK 8591, *Deep Blue Sea Blues*.

15215 ***Down The Dirt Road Blues*** Pm 12854

1. I'm going away to the one I know. (2)
I'm worried now, but I won't be worried long.

2. My rider got somethin', she tryin' to keep it hid. (2)
Lord, I got something to find that girl somewhere.

3. I feel like chopping, chips flying everywhere. (2)
I've been to the Nation, Lord, but I couldn't stay there.

4. Some people tell me, overseas blues ain't bad.
Spoken: My God they are.
Some people say them, overseas blues ain't bad.
Spoken: What was the matter with them?
It must not have been them overseas blues I had.

5. Everyday seem like murder here.
Spoken: My God, I'm gonna stay 'round.
Every day seem like murder here.
I'm gwine leave tomorrow, I know you don't, didn't want me here.

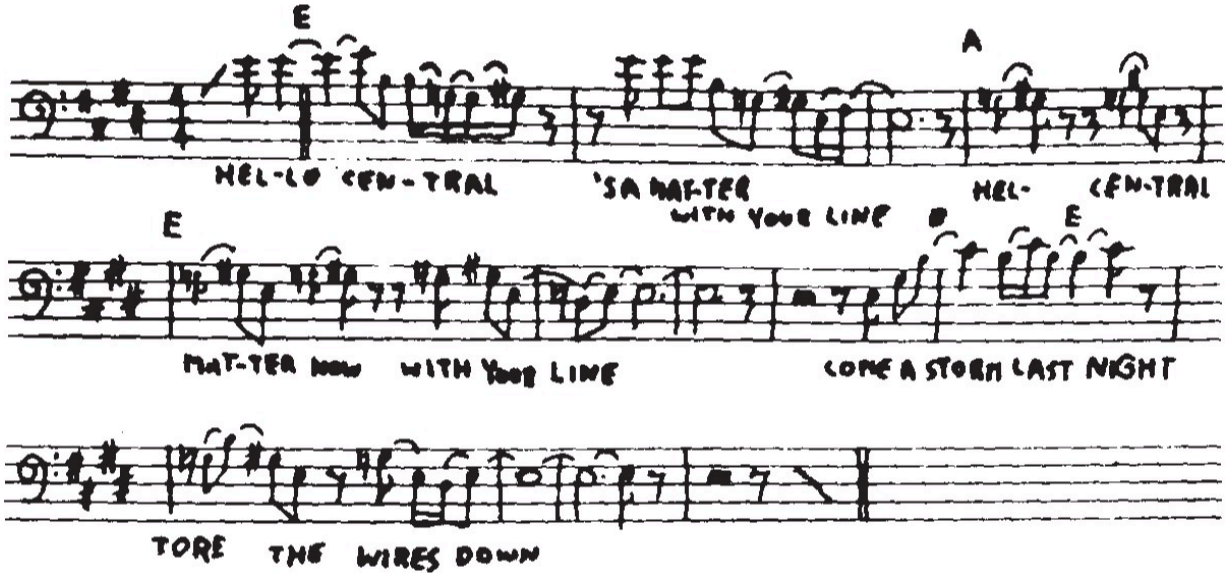
6. Can't go down this, dark road by myself.
Can't go down the, dark road by myself.
Spoken: My God, who you gonna carry?
I don't carry my rider gonna carry me someone's else.

DISCOGRAPHY: Stanza six: Garfield Akers, Vo 1481, *Dough Roller Blues*; Tommy Johnson, Vi 21279, *Big Road Blues*; Mattie Delaney, Vo 1480, *Down the Big Road Blues*.

15216 ***Pony Blues*** Pm 12792

1. Hitch up my pony, saddle up my black mare. (2)
   I'm gonna find a rider, Baby, in the world somewhere.

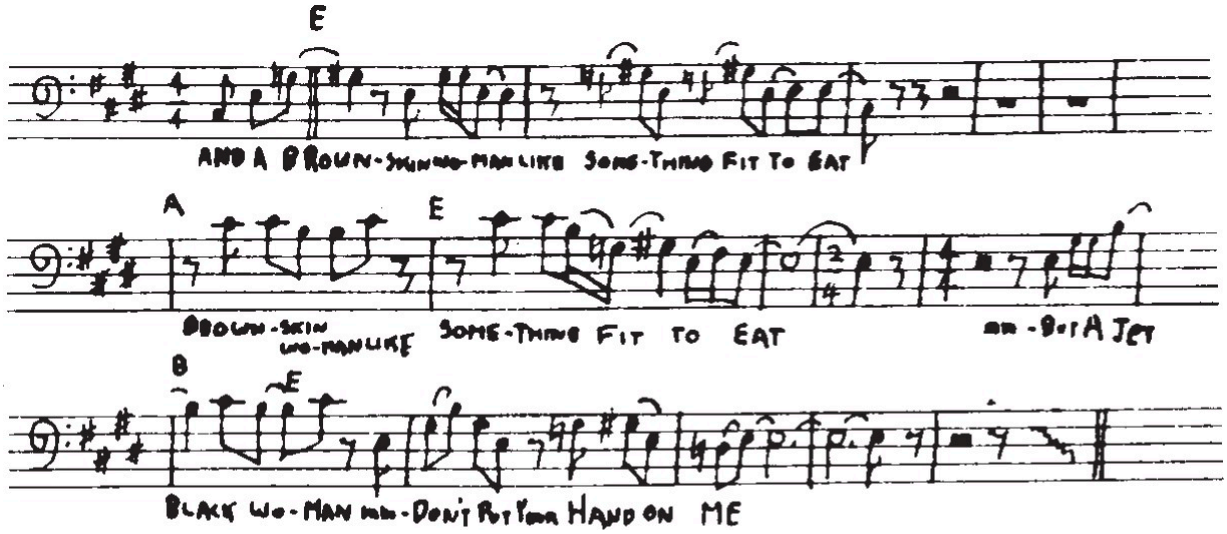
2. Hello, Central, 'sa matter with your line?
   Hello, Central, matter, now, with your line?
   Come a storm last night, tore the wires down.



3. Got a brand new Shetland, man, already trained.
   Brand new Shetland, baby, already trained.

Just get in the saddle, tighten up on your reins.

4. And a brownskin woman like something fit to eat.
   Brownskin woman like something fit to eat.
   But a jet-black woman, don't put your hand on me.



5. Took my baby, to meet the morning train.
   Took my baby, meet that morning train.
   And the blues come down, Baby, like showers of rain.

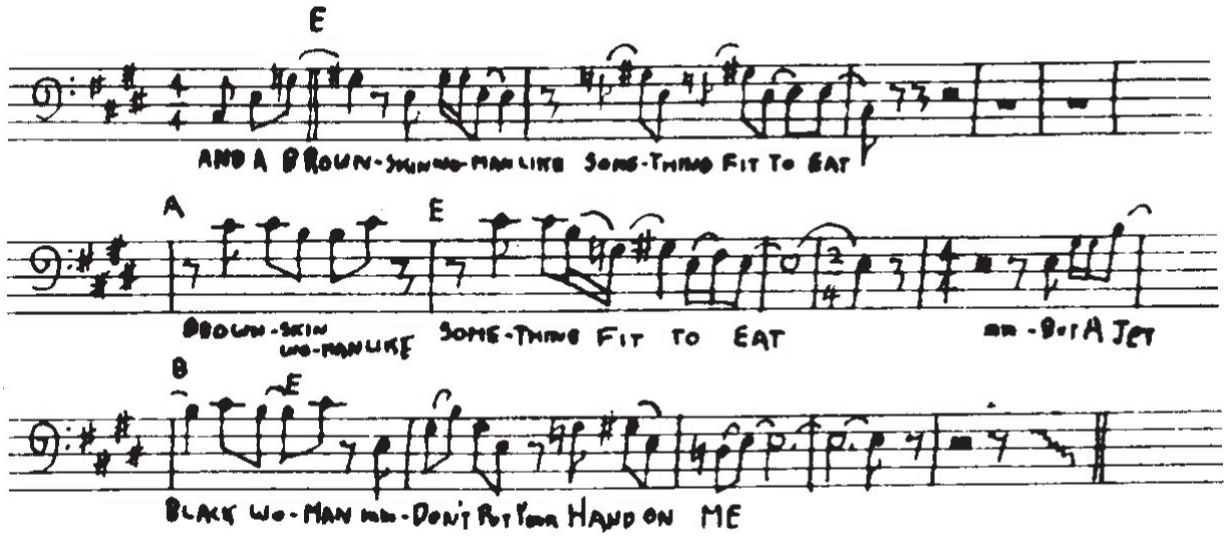
6. I got something to tell you, when I gets a chance.
   Something to tell you, when I get a chance.
   I don't want to marry, just want to be your man.

2.1 and 2.3 are in *The Hesitating Blues*, by W. C. Handy, printed in *Blues, An Anthology* (New York, 1926), p. 90. In Handy's song, 2.1 and 2.3 are not adjacent.

DISCOGRAPHY: Entire song: Son House, *Pony Blues* (in Library of Congress Archive of American Folksong).

15217 ***Banty Rooster Blues*** Pm 12792

1. I'm gonna buy me a banty, put him in my back door. (2)
   Lord, he sees a stranger coming, he'll flop his wings and crow.



2. What you want with a rooster, he won't crow 'fore day? (2)
   What you want with a man when he won't do nothing he say?
3. What you want with a hen won't, cackle when she lay? (2)
   What you want with a woman when she won't do nothing I say?
4. Oh, take my picture, hang it up in Jackson's wall. (2)
   Anybody ask you what about it, tell 'em 'That's all, that's all.'
5. My hook's in the water, and my cork's on top. (2)
   How can I lose, Lord, with the help I got?
6. I know my dog anywhere I hear him bark. (2)
   I can tell my rider if I feel her in the dark.

Patton probably learned this song by listening to Walter Rhodes' recording, *The Crowing Rooster*, Co 14289-D, recorded a year and a half before Patton's song was recorded. While the accompaniment is quite different, the tune and the text are virtually identical. Patton's fifth stanza does not occur on Rhodes' record. Rhodes sings instead a logical extension of the preceding stanza:

> Take my picture, put it in a frame. (2)
> So if I die you can see me just the same.

2.1 and 3.2 occur on L. C. Williams' Gold Star recording *You Never Miss The Water*, reissued on Arhoolie R2006, 'Texas Blues Vol. 1'. The same verses occur on Blind Willie McTell's recording, *Travelin' Blues*, Co 14484-D, as by 'Blind Sammie.'

15220 ***It Won't Be Long*** Pm 12854

1. I believe sweet mama, gwine do like she say, Baby. (2)
   Gon' cook my supper, Lord, put me in her bed.
2. You ever go down to Memphis, stop by Minglewood, Baby.
   You Memphis women don't mean no man no good.

3. She's got a man on a man, got a kid on her kid, Baby. (2)
   Done got so bold, Lord, won't keep it hid.

4. Ah, all right, ain't gonna be here long, Baby.
   All right, all right, ain't gonna be here long, Baby.
   Well, all right your daddy'll be here long.

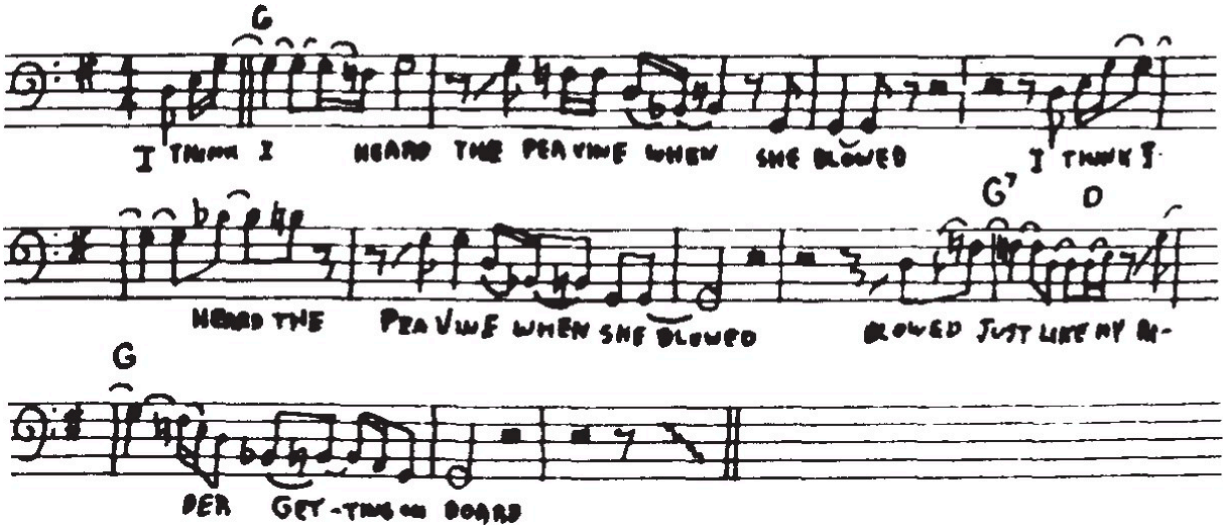
5. I believe sweet mama, sure was kind to me, Baby. (2)
   She's up at night, like a police on his beat.

6. I'll tell you something, keep it to yourself, Baby. (2)
   I'm gonna tell you something, keep it to yourself, Baby. (2)
   Please don't tell your husband, Lord, and no one else.

7. Got a long, tall woman, tall like a cherry tree, Baby. (2)
   She gets up 'fore day and she puts that thing on me.

15221 ***Pea Vine Blues*** Pm 12877

1. I think I heard the Pea Vine when she blowed. (2)
   Blowed just like my rider getting on board.


G
I THINK I HEARD THE PEA VINE WHEN SHE BLOWED I THINK I
G7 D
HEARD THE PEA VINE WHEN SHE BLOWED BLOWED JUST LIKE MY A-
G
BER GET-TING ON BOARD

2. If you're living single then, Babe, you know I . . .
   Spoken: Babe, you know I can't stay.
   You're living single, Lord, you know I ain't gonna stay.
   I'm going up the country, mama, in a few more days.

3. Yes, you know it, you know it, you know you done done me wrong. (3)

G
YES YOU KNOW IT YOU KNOW IT YOU KNOW YOU DONE DONE ME WRONG
G7 D G
YES YOU KNOW IT YOU KNOW IT YOU KNOW YOU DONE DONE ME WRONG YES YOU
G7 D G
KNOW IT YOU KNOW IT YOU KNOW YOU DONE DONE ME WRONG

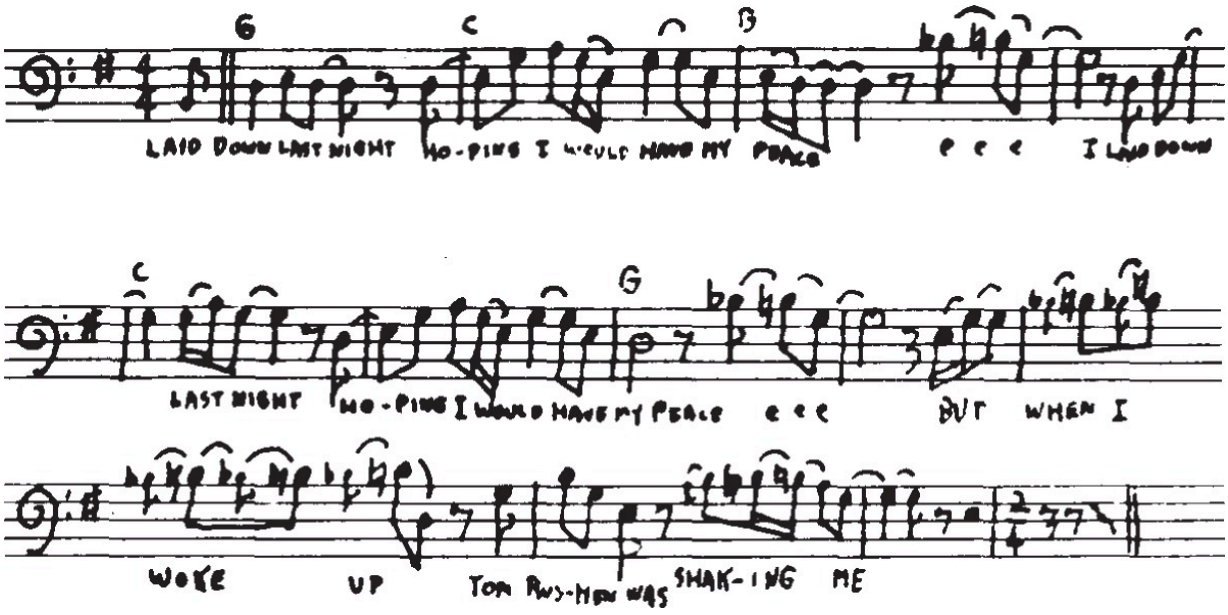
4. Yes, I cried last night, and I ain't gonna cry no more. (2)
   But the good book tells us, 'You got to reap just what you sow.'

5. Stop your way of living, and you won't . . .
   Spoken: You won't have to cry no more, Baby.
   Stop your way of living, and you won't have to cry no more. (2)

6. I think I heard the Pea Vine when she blowed. (2)
   She blowed just like she wasn't gon' blow no more.

15222 ***Tom Rushen Blues*** Pm 12877

1. I lay down last night, hoping I would have some peace . . . eeeee. (2)
   But when I woke up, Tom Rushen was shaking me.



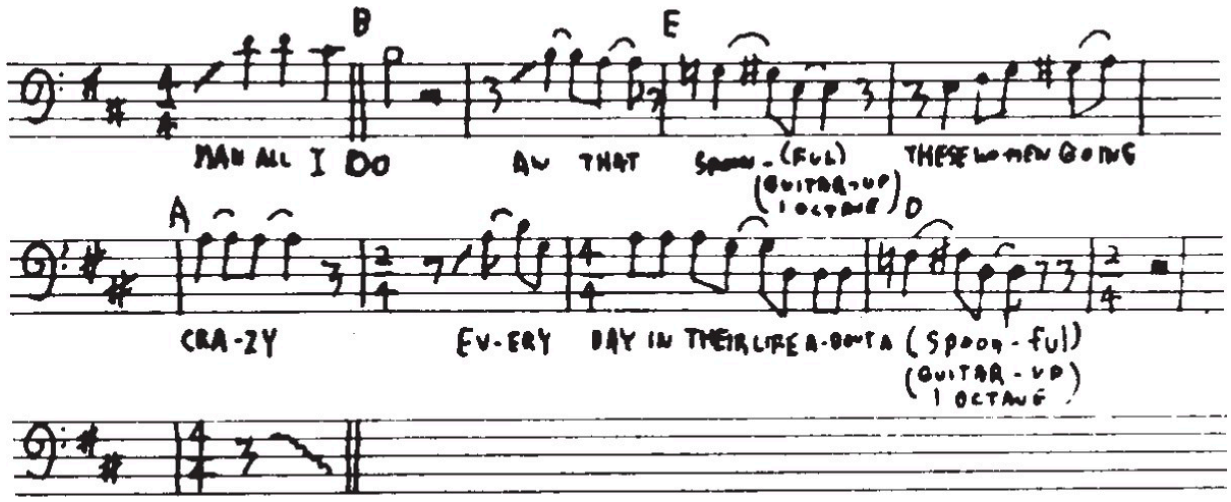
2. When you get in trouble, there's no use of screaming and crying . . . mmmmm. (2)
   Tom Rushen will take you back to Cleveland a' flying.
3. It was late one night, Holloway was gone to bed . . . mmmmm. (2)
   Mr. Day brought whiskey taken from under Holloway's head.
4. Ah, boozy booze, ah, Lord, to carry me through.
   It take boozy booze, Lord to carry me through.
   Thirty days seem like years in the jailhouse where there is no booze.
5. I got up this morning, Tom Day was standin' 'round . . . mmmmm. If he lose his office now, he's running from town to town.
6. Let me tell you folksies just how he treated me . . . mmmmm.
   I'm gonna tell you folksies just how he treated me . . . mmmmm.
   Ah, he brought me here, and I was drunk as I could be.

The tune and text of this song are very similar to Patton's later recording of *High Sheriff Blues*, Vo 02680. The tune is quite common. It occurs on Co 14029-D, *Hoodoo Blues*, by Bessie Brown; on Pm 13106, *4 O'Clock Blues*, [*sic*] by Skip James; and on Vo 03623, *From Four Until Late*, by Robert Johnson.

15223 ***Spoonful Blues*** Pm 12869

Introduction: *Spoken*: Got to brag all about this spoonful.

1. All I do, aw that spoon . . . –,
   These women going crazy, every day in their life 'bout a . . .



2. It's all I want in this creation is a . . .
   I go home,
   Spoken: want to fight,
   'bout a . . .
3. Some was dying,
   Spoken: In Hot Springs,
   Just 'bout a . . . ,
   These women going crazy, every day in their life 'bout a . . .
4. Would you kill my man, Babe?
   Spoken: Yes, I will,
   Just 'bout a . . .
   Aw, Babe, I'm a fool about my . . .
5. *Spoken*: Don't take me long,
   To get my . . .
   Hey, Baby, you know I need my . . .
6. The mens on Parchman,
   Spoken: done lifetime,
   Just 'bout a . . .
   Hey, Baby,
   Spoken: You know I ain't long,
   About my . . .
7. All I want,
   Spoken: Baby, in this creation,
   is a . . .
   I go to bed, get up and want to fight 'bout a . . .
8. *Spoken*: Looky here, Baby, you slap me? Yes I will
   Just 'bout a . . .
   Hey, Baby,
   Spoken: You know I'm a fool, a-
   'bout my . . .

9. Would you kill my man?
Spoken: Yes, I will. You know I'd kill him.
Just about a . . .
Most every man,
Spoken: that you see,
a fool about his . . .

10. *Spoken*: You know baby, I need
That old . . .
Hey, Baby,
Spoken: I want to hit the jug with it
'bout a . . .

11. *Spoken*: Baby, you going to quit me? Yeah hon',
Just about a . . .
It's all I want, baby, in this creation . . .

12. *Spoken*: Looky here, Baby, I'm leaving town,
Just 'bout a . . .
Hey, Baby,
Spoken: You know I need
that old . . .

13. *Spoken*: Don't make me mad, Baby, '
cause I want my . . .
Hey, baby, I'm a fool about that . . .

14. *Spoken*: Looky here, honey,
I need that . . .
Most every man lives in town got a . . .

15. Some of these men,
Spoken: I know they are
got a . . .
Hey, baby,
Spoken: I ain't sticking around here.
ain't got me a . . .

16. Oh, that spoonful.
Hey, Baby, you know I need my . . .

15224 ***Shake It and Break It But Don't Let It Fall Mama*** Pm 12869

Ch. 1. You can shake it, you can break it, you can hang it on the wall.
Out the window, catch it 'for it falls.
. . . You can break it, you can hang it on the wall.
Out the window, catch it 'for it falls.
My jelly, my roll, please, mama, don't you let it fall.

1. Everybody have a jelly roll like mine. I live in town.
I . . . ain't got no brown. I . . . and I don't want it long.
My jelly, my roll, please, mama, don't you let it fall.

Ch. 2. You can snatch it, you can grab it, you can break it, you can push it,
Any way that a fellow can get it.

I ain't had my right mind, since I have blowed in town.
My jelly, my roll, please, mama, don't you let it fall.

Ch. 1. (repeat)

2. I ain't got nobody here but me and myself.
I stay blue all the time, aw, when the sun goes down.
My jelly, my roll, please, mama, don't you let it fall.

Ch. 1. (repeat)

Ch. 3. You can snatch it, you can grab it, you can break it, you can push it,
Any way that a fellow can get it.
I had my right mind, I be worried sometime,
'Bout a jelly, my roll, please, Mama, don't you let it fall.

Ch. 1. (repeat)

Ch. 4. Just shake, you can break it you can hang it on the wall.
Out the window, catch it . . .
My jelly, my roll, please, Mama, don't you let it . . .

Patton later recorded this same song on Vo 02931, titled "Hang It On The Wall." Ch. 4.1 and 4.2 occur on Pm 12977, Over To My House, by Elvie Thomas and Geeshie Wiley.

15225 and 15225-*A* ***Prayer of Death*** Pm 12799

Part 1

Spoken: The Prayer of Death. Tone the bell! Time to just tone the bell again.

Tell them to sing a little song like this.

1. Take a stand, take a . . ., take a stand,
If I never, never see you any more.
Take a stand, take a s . . . , take a stand,
I'll meet you on that other . . .

2. I got His Word, etc.

3. I'm satisfied, etc.

4. I have a right, etc.

5. Done left over here, etc.
I'll meet you on that kingdom sh . . .

6. I got His Word, etc., as in 5.

7. Now here my hand, etc.

Spoken: Hey, thought I heard old brother stopped and went in prayer. Now, here him a' calling, 'Oh, Lord.'

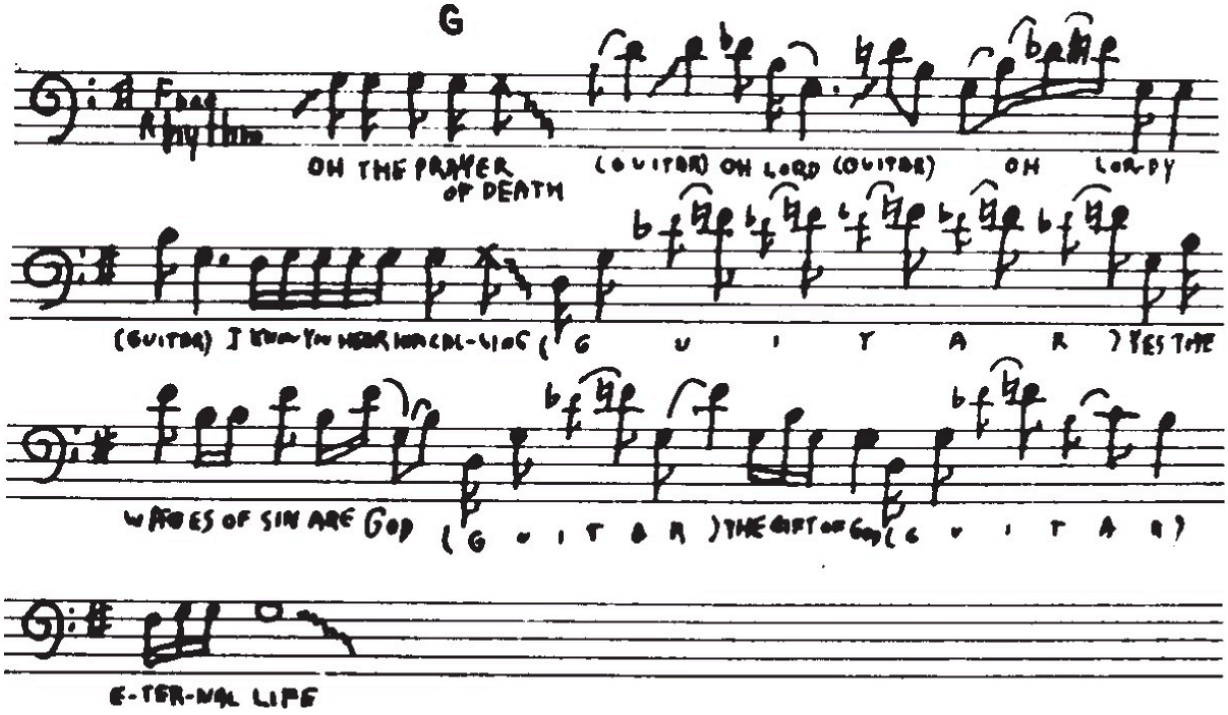
Sung: Oh, Lord, oh, Lordy.

Part 2

Spoken: Oh, the Prayer of Death.

Sung: Oh, Lord, oh Lordy.

Spoken: I know you been calling.


G
OH THE PRAYER OF DEATH
(GUITAR) OH LORD (GUITAR) OH LORDY
(GUITAR) I KNOW YOU HEAR ME CALLING (GUITAR) YES TIME
WAGES OF SIN ARE GOD (GUITAR) THE GIFT OF GOD (GUITAR)
E-TER-NAL LIFE

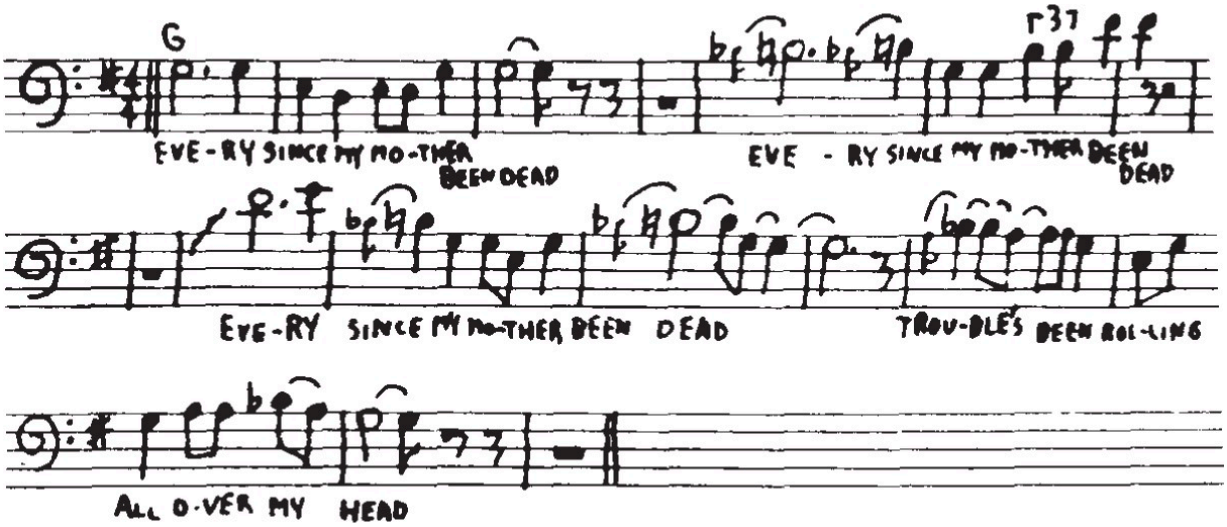
Sung: Yes, the wages of sin are God, the gift of God, eternal life.

Mmmmmmmm, Lordy, He said, 'You's a rock in a weary land.' Ah, children, the time was told, mmmmm (?).

Spoken: Amen. Children, when you all begin to moan, 'Lord, have mercy.'

Sung: Why don't you save me, Lord?

1. Ever since my mother been dead. (3)
   Trouble's been rolling all over my head.

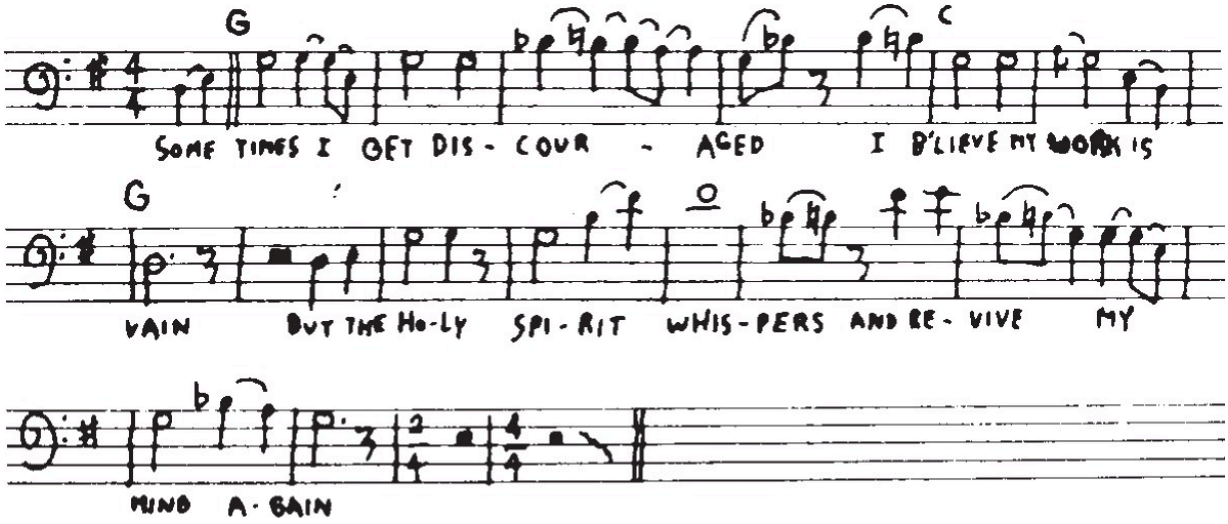

G
EVE-RY SINCE MY MO-THER BEEN DEAD
EVE - RY SINCE MY MO-THER BEEN DEAD
EVE-RY SINCE MY MO-THER BEEN DEAD
TROU-BLE'S BEEN ROL-LING
ALL O-VER MY HEAD

2. I've been 'buked and I been scorned. (3)
   I've been talked about sure as you're born.
3. (repeat 2)
4. Hold to God's unchanging . . . (2)
   Pin your hopes on things eternal.
   Hold to God's unchanging . . .
5. (repeat 2)

The first song sung in Part 1 fills up the entire side of *I'm Going Home* (Pm 12883), text 15227. For notes on this song see that text. *Prayer of Death*, the following song, and *I'm Going Home* all have adjacent master numbers.

15226 ***Lord, I'm Discouraged*** Pm 12883

1. Sometime I get discouraged. I believe my work, is in vain.
   But the Holy Spirit whispers, and revive my mind again.



Ch. There'll be glory, what a glory, when we reach that other shore.
There'll be glory, what a glory, praying to Jesus evermore.

2. I'm on my way to glory, to that happy land so fair.
I'll soon reside with God's army, with the Saints of God up there.

Ch. (repeat)

3. I'm on my way to glory, to that happy land so . . .
I'll shout his spiritual army, with the Saints of God up there.

Ch. (repeat)

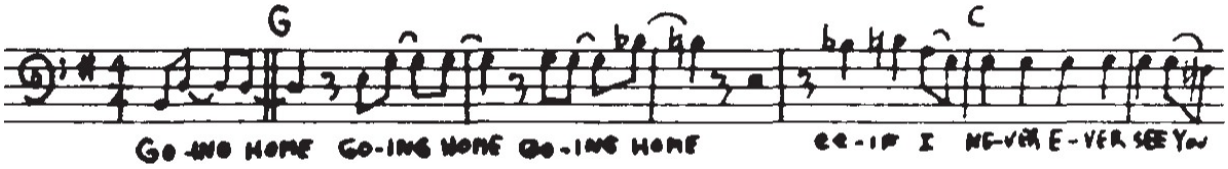
4. Sometimes I have no religion, feeling hopeless here on this earth.
Well, I think of sweet King Jesus' great kingdom in the . . .

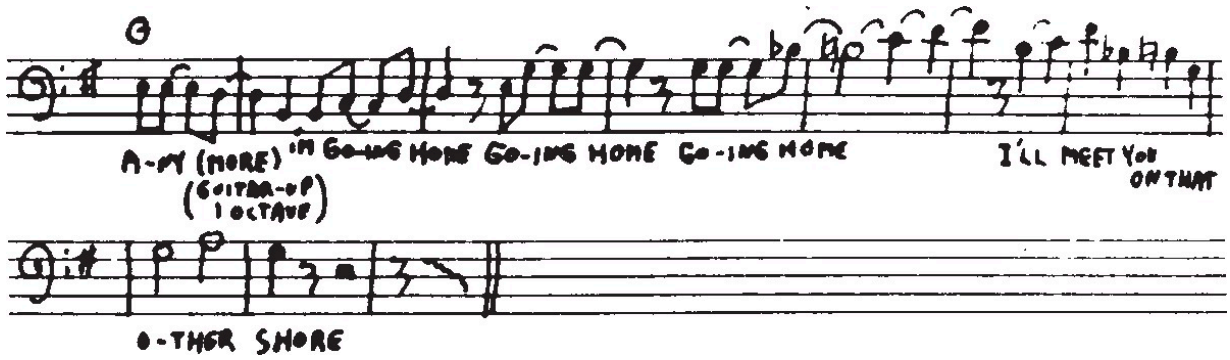
Ch. (repeat)

See *Let Us Cheer the Weary Traveler*, in *A Treasury of the Blues* (New York, 1926), W. C. Handy, editor, and *Hol' Out to De En'!* in *Befo' De War Spirituals* (Boston, 1933), collected by E. A. McIllhenny.

15227 ***I'm Going Home*** Pm 12883

1. Going home, going home, going home.
If I never, never see you any more.





I'm going home, going home, going home.
I'll meet you on that other shore.

2. I got his word, etc.
3. I have a right, etc.
4. Oh, here's my hand, etc.
5. Take a stand, etc.
   I'll meet you on that kingdom shore.
6. I'm satisfied, etc.
7. I have a right, etc.
8. Fare you well, etc.
9. I've been redeemed, etc.

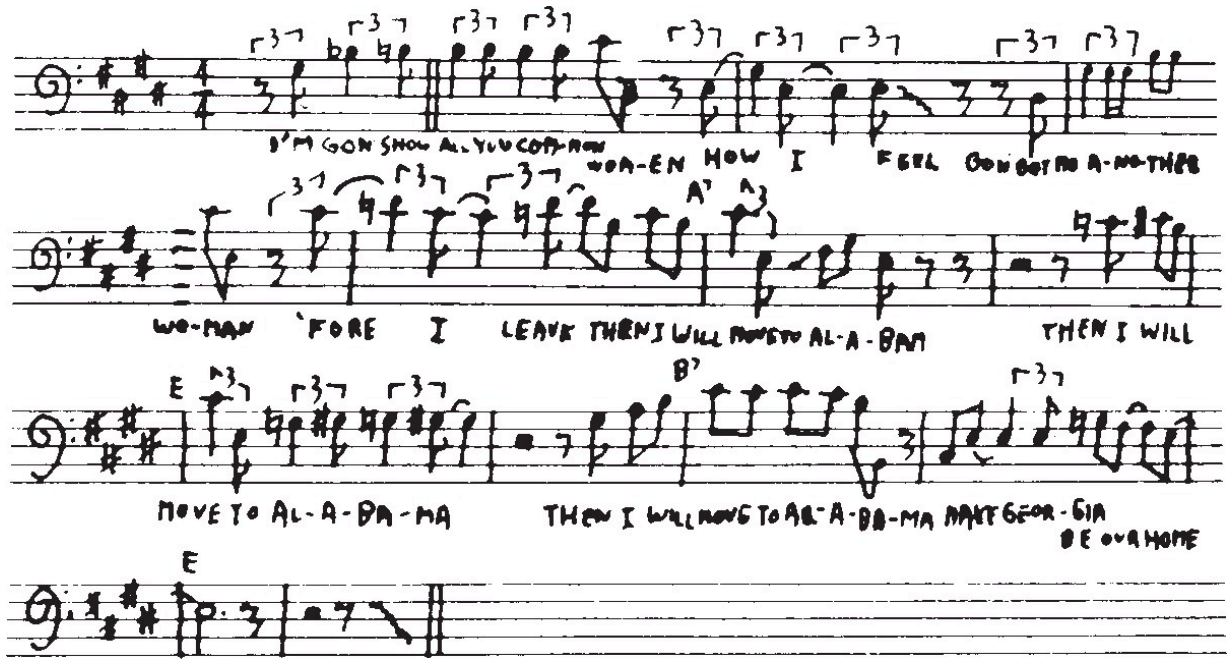
DISCOGRAPHY: Entire song: Blind Willie Johnson, Co 14520-D, *Take Your Stand*; Elders McIntorsh and Edwards, OK 8671, *Take A Stand*.

L-37 ***Going to Move to Alabama*** Pm 13014

1. (music only, used as an introduction.)

Ch. I'm going to move to Alabama. (3)
To make Georgia be our home.

2. Ah, she's long and tall.
   The way she do the boogie, makes a panther squall.
3. I'm gon' show you common women, how I feel.
   Gon' to get me another woman, 'fore I leave.



Ch. Then I will move to Alabama. (3)
Make Georgia be our home.

4. Mama got the washboard, my sister got the tub.
My brother got the whiskey, mama got the jug.

Ch. (as in 1)

5. Well, these evil women sure make me tired.
Got a handful of 'gimmie,' mouthful of 'much obliged.'

Ch. You must have been to Alabama. (3)
To make Georgia be your home.

6. Well, I got a woman, she's long and she's tall.
But when she wiggles, she makes a panther squall.

Ch. She going to move to Alabama
Have you been to Alabama? (2)
To make Georgia be your home.

7. Say, mama and pappa, going for a walk.
Left my sister standing at the waterin' trough.

Ch. Have you been to Louisiana?
Have you been to Alabama? (2)
To make Georgia be your home.

8. My mama told me.
Never love a woman like she can't love you.

Ch. Have you been to Alabama? (3)
To make Georgia be your home.

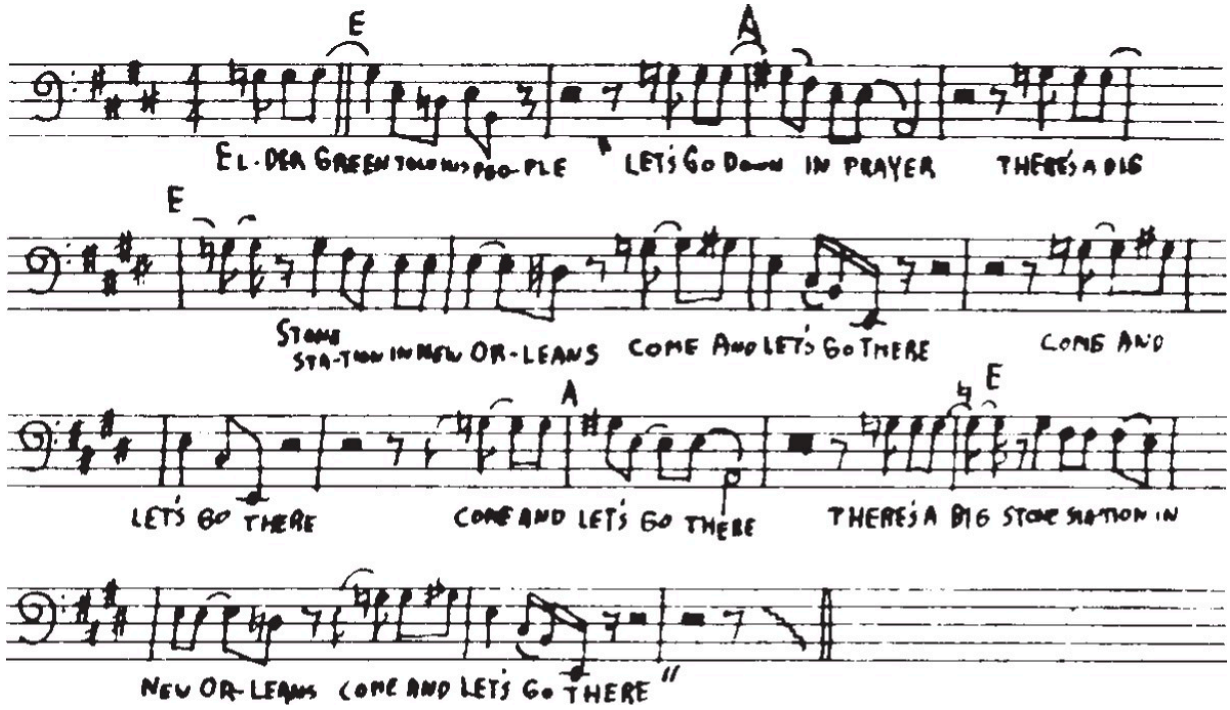
9. I got up this morning, my hat in my hand.
Didn't have (?).

Ch. (as in 8)

DISCOGRAPHY: Entire song: Jim Jackson, Vo 1144, 1155, *Jim Jackson's Kansas City Blues*, parts 1 through 4, Vi 21671, *I'm Gonn a Move to Louisiana*, parts 1 and 2; Billy Bird, Co 14418-D, *Alabama Blues*, parts 1 and 2; Lonnie Johnson, OK 8537, *Kansas City Blues*, parts 1 and 2.

L-38 ***Elder Greene Blues*** Pm 12972

1. Greene is . . .
   Elder Greene is gone.
   Gone way down the country with his long clothes on.
   With his long clothes on. (2)
   Gone way down the country with his long clothes on.



2. Elder Greene told his people:
   'Let's go down in prayer.
   There's a big stone station in New Orleans.
   Come and let's go there.'

3. I love to fuss and fight. (2)
   Lord, and get sloppy drunk off a bottle and bawl,
   And walk the streets all night. (3)
   Lord, and get sloppy drunk off a bottle and bawl,
   And walk the streets all night.

4. Elder Greene told the (?).
   'Let's go down in prayer.
   (?).
   (?).

(?).
(?).
(?).
(?).
(?).

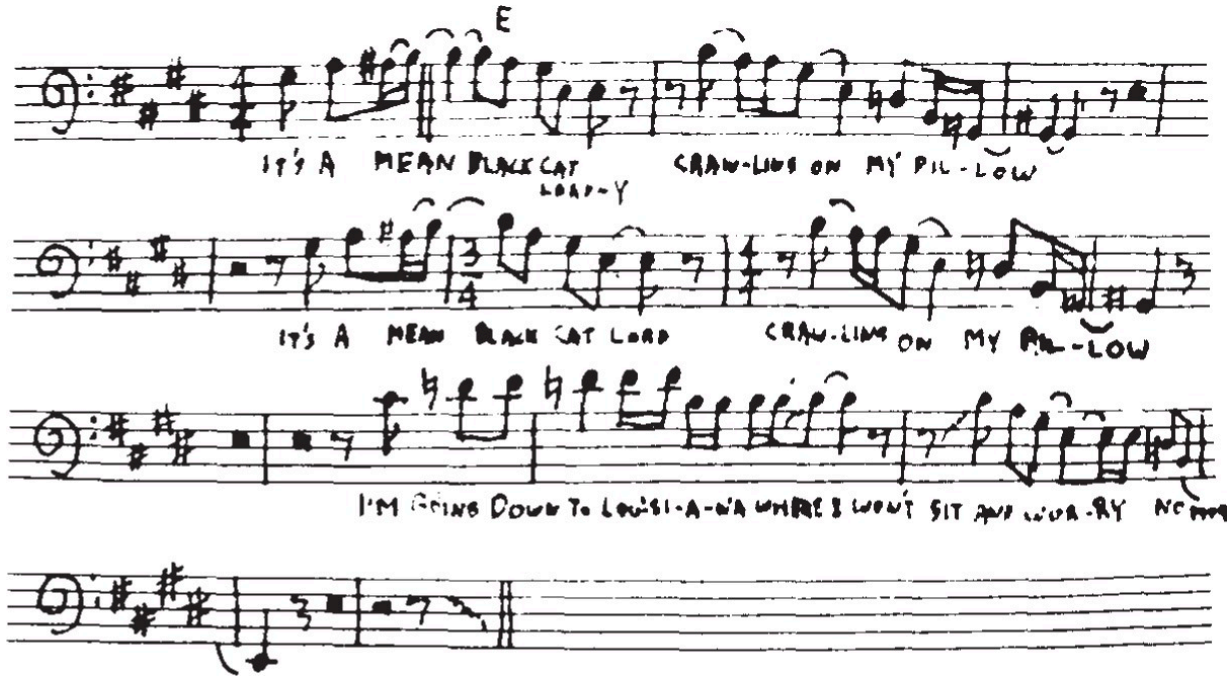
5. Elder Greene is gone. (2)
   Gone way down the country.
   With his long clothes on.

6. (entire stanza is unintelligible)

7. I love to fuss and fight. (2)
   Lord, and get sloppy drunk off a bottle and bawl,
   And walk the streets all night.

See *Ol' Elder Green*, in John W. Work's book, *American Negro Songs* (New York, 1940), p. 241.

DISCOGRAPHY: 1. 1, 2, and 3: 'Papa' Charlie Jackson, Pm 12289, *I'm Alabama Bound*; Leadbelly, Folkways FA2488, *Alabama Bound*. Entire song: Blind Lemon Jefferson, OK unissued master 80528-B, *Elder Green's In Town*.


E
IT'S A MEAN BLACK CAT CRAW-LING ON MY PIL-LOW
LORD-Y
IT'S A MEAN BLACK CAT LORD CRAW-LING ON MY PIL-LOW
I'M GOING DOWN TO LOUISI-A-NA WHERE I WON'T SIT AND WOR-RY

L-41 ***Mean Black Cat Blues*** Pm 12943

1. It's a mean black cat, Lordy, crawling on my pillow. (2)
   I'm going down to Louisiana where I won't, sit and worry no more.

2. It's a mean black cat, Lordy, all around my bed. (2)
   I'm gonna get up some morning, kill that black cat dead.

3. It's a mean black cat, Lordy, Lord it's wearing my clothes.

It's a mean black cat, Lordy, I mean it's wearing my clothes.
If you want any more of my loving, let that black cat go.

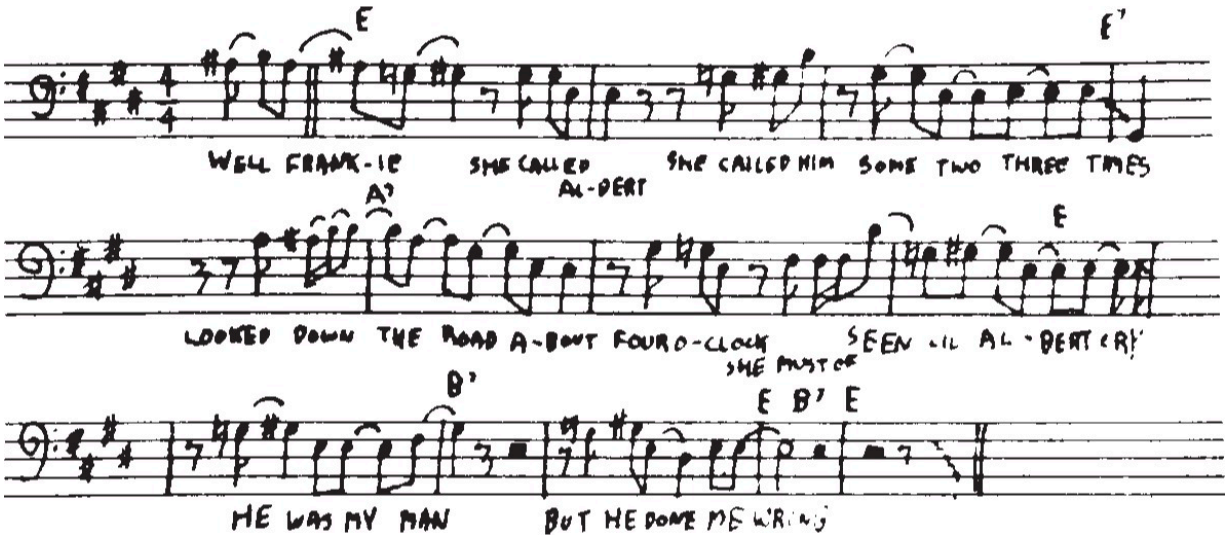
4. First time I met you, I said you was a fool.
First time I met you, said you was a fool.
You've got a new way of loving, swear it ain't no good.

5. Next time I met you, you know I made a hit. (2)
But you got a way of loving, swear it just won't quit.

L-42 ***Frankie And Albert*** Pm 13110

1. Well, Frankie went down to Albert's house.
'How late has Albert been here?'
Old Albert's sitting in some kid girl's lap.
Buying some kid gal's beer.

Ch. Hey, he was my man,
But he done me wrong.


E
E'
WELL FRANK-IE SHE CALLED AL-BERT SHE CALLED HIM SOME TWO THREE TIMES
A'
E
LOOKED DOWN THE ROAD A-BOUT FOUR O-CLOCK SHE MUST OF SEEN LIL AL-BERT FLY'
B'
E B' E
HE WAS MY MAN BUT HE DONE ME WRONG

2. Well, Frankie she called Albert.
She called him some two—three times.
Looked down the road about four o'clock.
She must 'a seen Lil' Albert flyin.

Ch. As in 1.

3. Well, Frankie she was a good old gal,
As anybody knows.
She would pay one hatful of dollars,
For the makin' of her man's clothes.

Ch. As in 1.

4. Well, Frankie went down to the courthouse.
To hear little Albert tried.
Old Albert was convicted.

Frankie hung her head and cried.
Ch. As in 1.

5. ‘Can you remember all last Sunday,
Twentieth day of May?
You ’bused me and you cursed me,
Oh, baby, all that day.’
Ch. As in 1.

6. ‘Tell me some folks give you a nickel,
And it’s some folks give you a dime.
But I’m going to give you a smile instead,
For I know you was a man of mine.’
Ch. Oh, killed her man. (2)

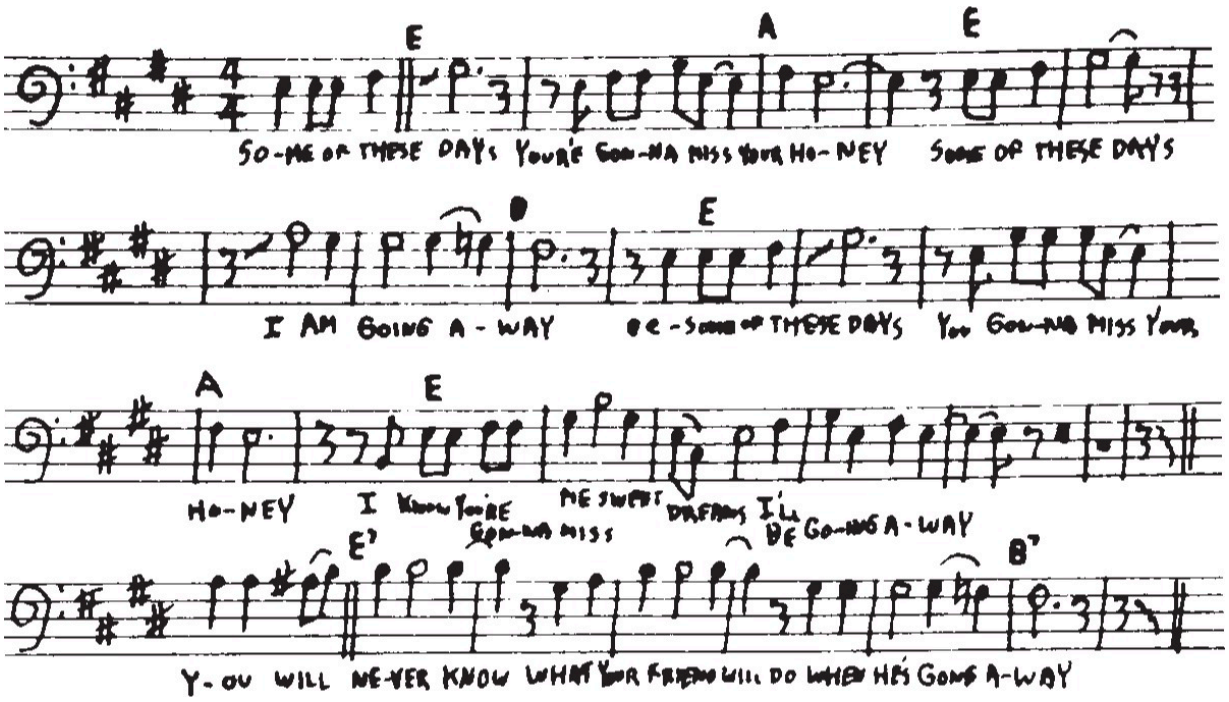
7. Oh, Frankie went to the cemetery;
Fell down on her knees.
‘Oh, Lord, will you forgive me,
And give my poor heart ease?’
Ch. As in 1.

8. Well, Frankie’s mother come running,
Come a’ whooping, screaming, and crying.
‘Oh, Lord, oh Lord,
My only son is dying.’
Ch. She killed her man.
Yes, she killed her man.

See G. Malcolm Laws, Jr., *Native American Balladry* (Philadelphia, 1964), 1. 3. Discography: entire song: Mississippi John Hurt, OK 8560, *Frankie*; Jimmie Rodgers, Vi 22143, *Frankie and Johnny*; Welby Toomey, Gennett 3195, *Frankie’s Gamblin’ Man*; Darby and Tarlton, Co 15701-D, *Frankie Dean*; Dykes Magic City Trio, Br 127, *Frankie*.

L-43 ***Some These Days I’ll Be Gone*** Pm 13110

1. Some of these days, you’re gonna miss your honey.
Some of these days, I am going away.
Some of these days, you’re gonna miss your honey.
I know you’re gonna miss me, sweet dreams, I’ll be going away.



2. Some these days, you're gonna be sorry.
   Some these days, I am going away.
   Some these days, you're gonna miss your honey.
   I know you're gonna miss me, sweet babe, when I'll be going away.

3. You will never know, what your friend will do,
   When he's gone away.
   You will miss him for returning.
   You will miss him from going away.
   You will miss him, oh, little honey,
   I know you're gonna miss me, sweet babe, when I'll be going away.

4. (repeat 3)

5. Some these days, you're gonna be sorry.
   Some these days, I am going away.
   Some these days, you're gonna miss your honey.
   I know you're gonna miss me, sweet babe, when I'll be going away.

6. (repeat 5)

7. Some of these days, you're gonna miss your honey.
   Some of these days, I am going away.
   Some of these days, you're gonna miss your honey.
   I know you're gonna miss me, sweet dreams, I'll be going away.

8. Some these days, I'm going to be leaving
   Some these days, I'll be going away.
   Some these days, you're gonna miss your honey.
   I know you're gonna miss me, sweet dreams, when I'll be going away.

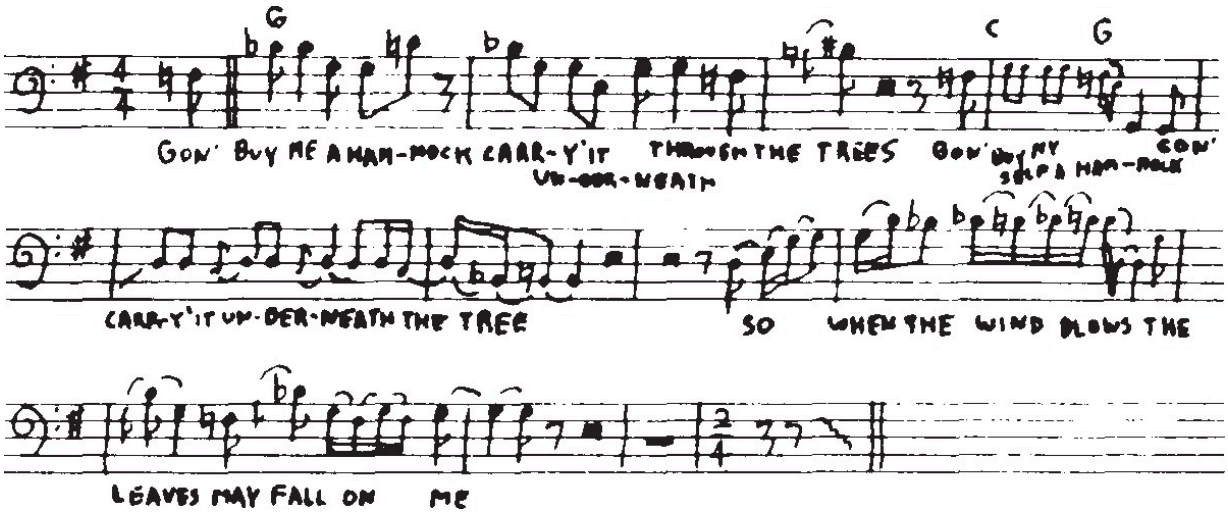
1. I see a river, rolling like a log.
   I wade up Green River rollin' like a log.
   I wade Green River, Lord, rolling like a log.
2. Think I heard that, Marion whistle blow.
   I think I heard that, Marion whistle blow.
   And it blew just like my, baby getting on board.
3. I'm going where the Southern cross the Dog. (3)
4. Some people say the Green River blues ain't bad. (2)

E
IT WAS LATE ONE NIGHT EV-ERY THING WAS STILL IT WAS LATE
A'
E
ONE NIGHT BA-BY EV-ERY THING WAS STILL I COULD SEE
B'
E
MY BA-BY 'PON A LONE-SOME HILL

   Then it must not have been them Green River blues I had.

5. It was late one night, everything was still.
   It was late one night, Baby, everything was still.
   I could see my baby upon a lonesome hill.
6. How long, evening train been gone?
   How long, Baby, that evening train been gone?
   Yes, I'm worried now but I won't be worried long.
7. I'm going away, to make it lonesome here. (2)
   Yes, I'm going away to make it lonesome here.

7, 1 and 2 occur on Co 14429-D, *Rock Island Blues*, by Lewis Black.


G
C
G
GON' BUY ME A HAM-MOCK CARR-Y'IT THROUGH THE TREES GON' BUY MY
UN-DER-NEATH
SELF A HAM-MOCK GON'
CARR-Y'IT UN-DER-NEATH THE TREE SO WHEN THE WIND BLOWS THE
LEAVES MAY FALL ON ME

L-47 ***Hammer Blues*** Pm 12998

1. Gon' buy me a hammock, carry it underneath through the trees.
   Gon' buy myself a hammock, gon' carry it underneath the tree.
   So when the wind blow, the leaves may fall on me.
2. Go on, Baby, you can have your way. (2)
   Sister, every dog must have his day.
3. Got me in shackles, wearin' my ball and . . .
   They got me in shackles, I'm wearin' my ball and chain.
   And they got me ready for that Parchman train.
4. I went to the depot, I looked up at the board. (2)
   And the train had left, went steaming on up the road.
5. Clothes I'll buy, Baby, Honey, your board I'll pay.
   Your board I'll pay and, Honey, your clothes I'll buy.
   I will give you all my loving, Baby, till the day I die.
6. I was way up Red River, calling all night . . .
   I was way up Red River, calling all night long.
   I think I heard the Bob Lee boat when she moaned.

This record was obviously mistitled *Hammer Blues* instead of *Hammock Blues*, since Patton sings about a hammock and not a hammer. It is impossible to tell who was responsible for this error.

L-49 ***When Your Way Gets Dark*** Pm 12998

1. When your way gets dark, Baby, turn your lights up high.
   Spoken: What's the matter with 'em?
   When you see my man, Lordy, he come easin' by.
2. I take my baby . . .
   Spoken: Seven; forty-five.
   I take my baby . . .
3. Trouble Baby . . .
   Spoken: trying to blow me down.
   It wouldn't hurt so bad, but the news all over this (town).
4. I love my baby, and I . . .
   Spoken: tell the world I do.
   What made me love her, you'll come and love her too.
5. Yeah, someday Baby . . .
   Spoken: Well, and it won't be long.
   Someday baby . . .
   She calling me, Baby, and I'll be gone.
6. I'm going away, Baby.
   Spoken: Don't you want to go?
   I'm going away, Baby, don't you want to go?

L-50 ***Heart Like Railroad Steel*** Pm 12953

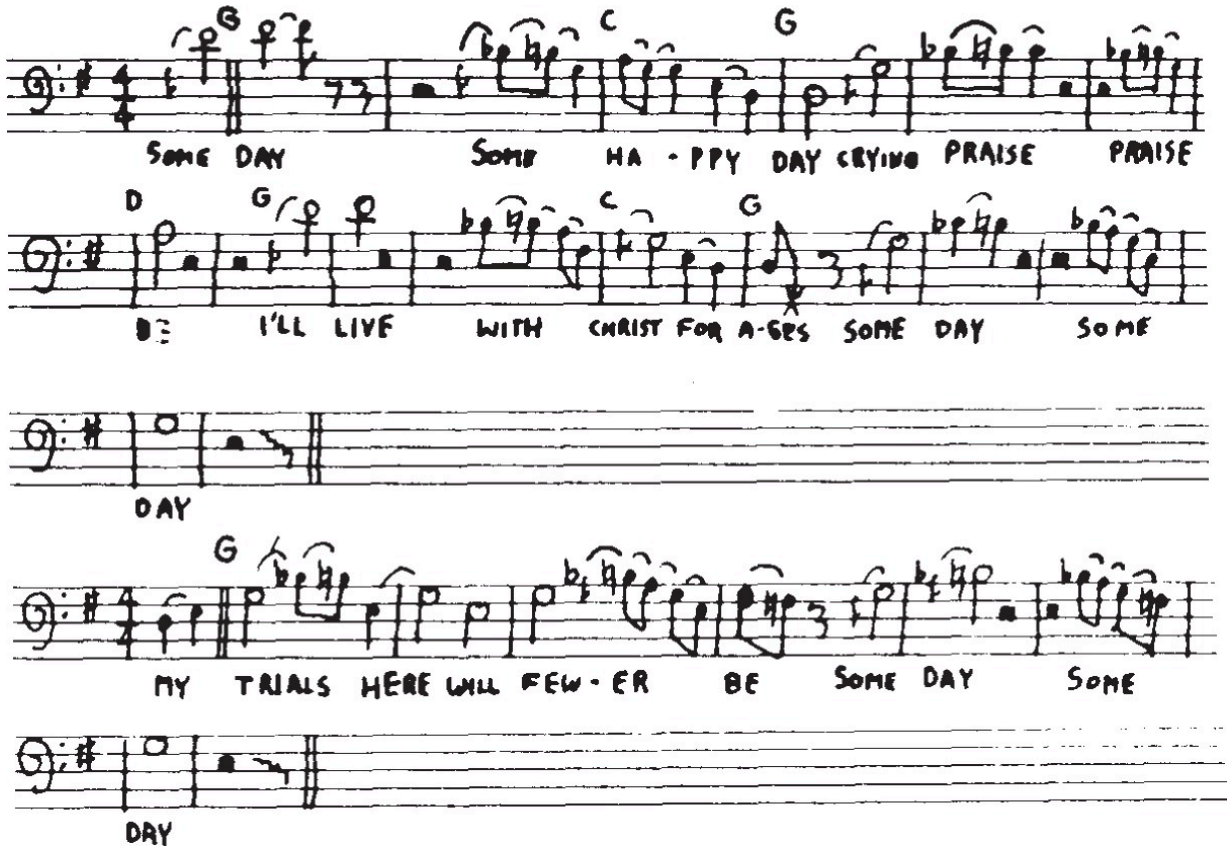
1. My babe's got a heart like a piece of railroad steel. (2)
   If I leave you this morning, never say, 'Dad, how do you feel?'
2. I will leave her at the crossing, when the train pass by. (2)
   She blowed for the crossing, then she started to fly.
3. I got up this morning, something after five. (2)
   And the morning sun well, was beginning to rise.
4. I will cut your wood, Baby. [Patton's only recorded guitar solo occurs here.]

Cut your wood, Baby, I will make your fire.
I will tote your water, from the boggy bayou.

5. (? .)
I didn't find me nobody, did not have a man.

L-51 ***Some Happy Day*** Pm 13031

Ch. Some day, some happy day, crying praise, praise be.
I'll live with Christ for ages, some day, some day.


G C G
SOME DAY SOME HA - PPY DAY CRYING PRAISE PRAISE
D G C G
BE I'LL LIVE WITH CHRIST FOR A-GES SOME DAY SOME
DAY
G
MY TRIALS HERE WILL FEW - ER BE SOME DAY SOME
DAY

Ch. Repeat.

1. My trails here will fewer be, some day, some day.
Ch. Repeat.

2. When I shall have eternal home, some day, some day.
Ch. Repeat.

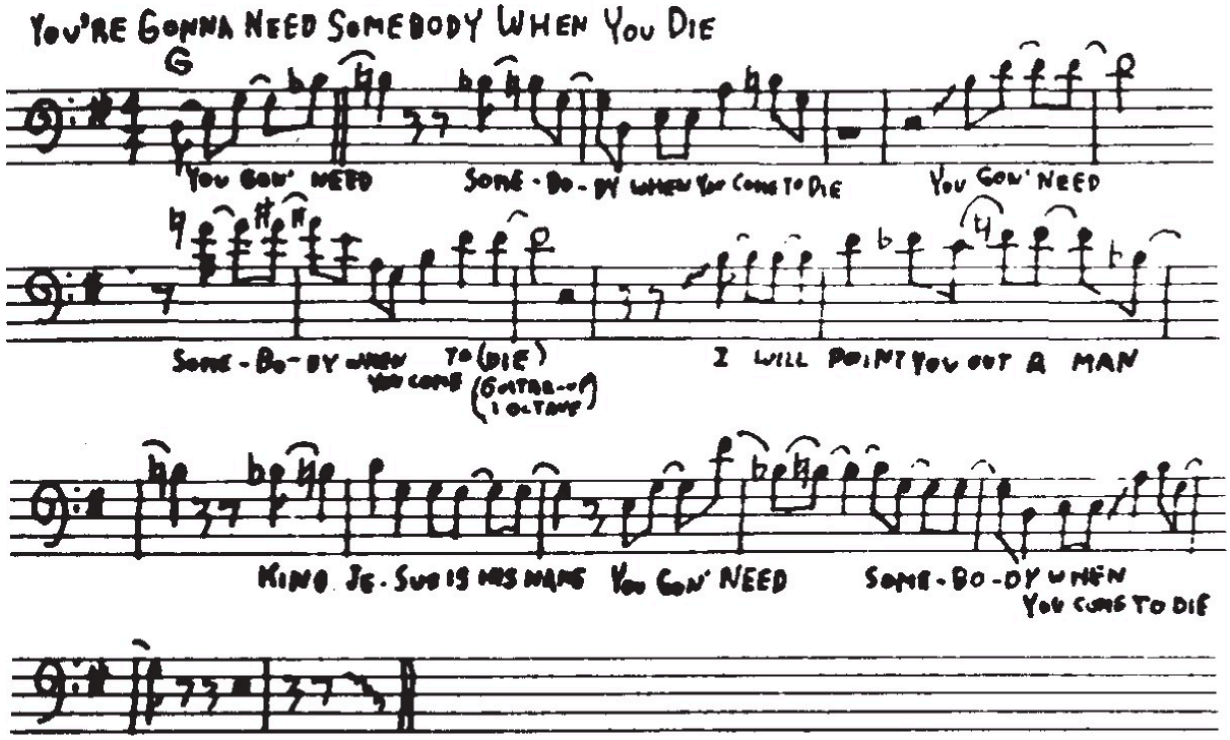
3. Some day I'll be in the entrance here, some day, some day.
Ch. Repeat.

4. My trails here will fewer be, some day, some day.

L-52 ***You're Gonna Need Somebody When You Die*** Pm 13031

1. You gonna need somebody when you come to die. (2)
   I will point you out a man, King Jesus is His name.
   You gonna need somebody when you come to die.

2. Yes, I got a lawyer to go my bond.
   Well, I've got a lawyer to go my bond.
   Well, I'll point you out a man, King Jesus is His name.
   Well, I've got a lawyer to go my . . .


YOU'RE GONNA NEED SOMEBODY WHEN YOU DIE
G
YOU GON' NEED
SOME-BO-DY WHEN YOU COME TO DIE
YOU GON' NEED
SOME-BO-DY WHEN YOU COME TO (DIE)
(GUITAR-ONLY)
I WILL POINT YOU OUT A MAN
KING JE-SUS IS HIS NAME
YOU GON' NEED
SOME-BO-DY WHEN YOU COME TO DIE

Spoken: 'Well, friends, I want to tell you, they tell me when He come down his hair gonna be like lamb's wool, and his eyes like flames of fire, and every man gonna know He's the son of the true living God, 'round his shoulders going to be a rainbow, and his feet like fine brass; and, my friends, I wanted you to know again, He said that He going to have a river water that's flowing through the garden,' 'clared the preacher. And He's gonna have a tree before the twelve manners of food, and the leaves gonna be healing damnation, and the big rock that you can set behind, the wind can't blow at you no more, and you gonna count the four and twenty elders that you can sit down and talk with and that you can talk about your trouble that you come, world that you just come from. He going to sing this verse. [*sic*]

3. I got a lawyer to go my bond. (2)
   I will point you out a man, King Jesus is His . . .
   I got a lawyer to go my bond.

4. Don't you need somebody when you come to die? (2)
   I will point you out a man, King Jesus is His name
   Well, I've got a lawyer to go . . .

5. Yes, you need somebody when you come to die.
   Don't you need somebody when you come to die.

Well, I'll point you out a man, King Jesus is His name.
Well, I got a lawyer . . .

6. Well, I've got somebody to go my bond. (2)
Well, I'll point you out a man, King Jesus is His name.
Well, I got a lawyer to go my bond.

DISCOGRAPHY: Entire song: Blind Willie Johnson, Co 14504-D, *You'll Need Somebody on Your Bond*, and Co 14530-D, *You're Gonna Need Somebody On Your Bond*.

L-59 ***High Water Everywhere - Part 1*** Pm 12909

1. The back-water done rose all around Sumner, Lord, drove me down the line.
Back-water done rolled around Sumner, drove poor Charley down the line.
Well I tell the world the water, done struck through this town.

2. Lord, the whole round country, Lord, crick water is overflowed.
Lord, the whole round country, Man, is overflowed.
Spoken: You know I can't stay here. I'm bound to go where it's high, boy.
I would go to the hill country, but they got me barred.

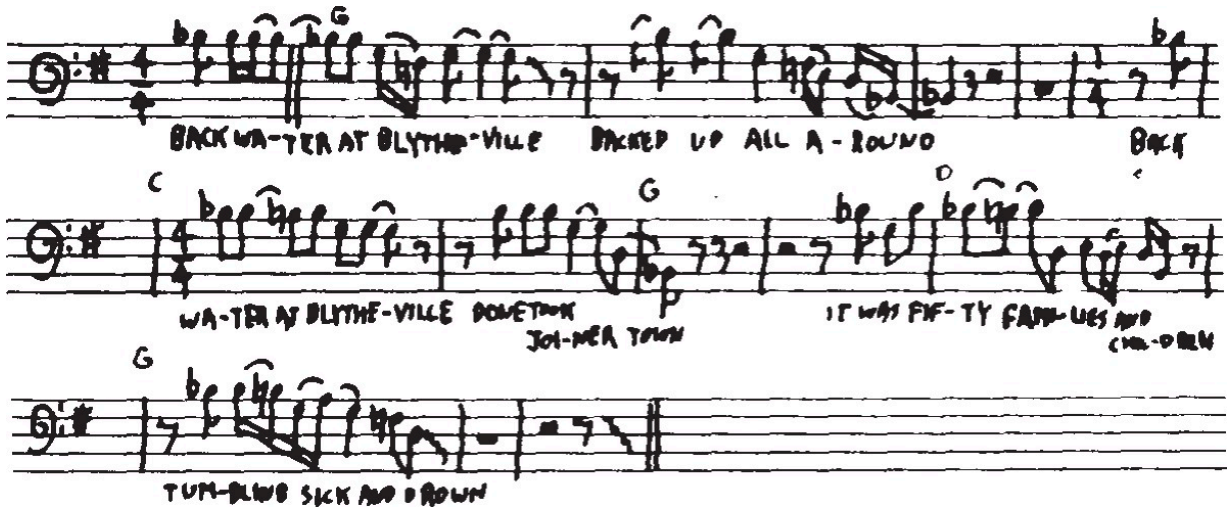
3. Now looky here now Leland, Lord, river was rising high.
Looky here, boys around Leland tell me, river is ragin high.
Spoken: Boy, it's rising over there. Yeah.
I'm going to move over to Greenville, 'fore I say 'goodbye.'

4. Looky here, the water dug out, Lordy, something broke, rolled most everywhere.
The water at Greenville and Leland, Lord, it done rose everywhere.
Spoken: Boy, you can't never stay here.
I would go down to Rosedale, but they tell me there's water there.

5. Now the water now, Mama, done struck Charley's town.
Well, they tell me the water sure struck Charley's town.
Spoken: Boy, I'm going to Vicksburg.
Well, I'm going to Vicksburg, 'fore I have mine.

6. I am going up that water where land don't never flow.
Well, I'm going over the hill where water, oh, it don't never flow.
Spoken: Boy, hit Sharkey County and everything was down in Stovall.
But that county was leavin' over that Tallahatchie shore.
Spoken: Boy, went to Tallahatchie and got it over there.

7. Lord, the water done rushed all, over that old Jackson road.
Lord, the water done raised up, over the Jackson road.
Spoken: Boy, it got in my clothes.
I'm going back to the hilly country, won't be worried no more


BACK WA-TER AT BLYTHE-VILLE BACKED UP ALL A-ROUND
WA-TER AT BLYTHE-VILLE DONE TOOK JOI-NER TOWN
IT WAS FIF-TY FAM-ILIES AND
TUM-BLING SICK AND DROWN

L-60 ***High Water Everywhere - Part 2*** Pm 12909

1. Back-water at Blytheville, backed up all around.
   Back-water at Blytheville, done took Joiner town.
   It was fifty families and children, tell me, that sank and drowned.
2. The water was rising up in my friend's door. (2)
   The man said to his womenfolk, 'Lord, we'd better go.'
3. The water was rising, got up in my bed.
   Lord, the water was rolling, got up to my bed.
   I thought I would take a trip Lord, out on the days I slept.
4. Oh, I can hear the horn blow, water upon my door.
   Spoken: Blowing . . . (?)
   I hear the ice, Lord, Lord was sinking down.
   I couldn't get no boat there, Marion City gone down.
5. Oh, the water was rising, and we're sinking down.
   And the water was rising, at places all around.
   Spoken: Boy they's all around.
   It was fifty men and children, tumbling, sink, and drown.
6. Oh, Lordy, women and grown men down.
   Oh, women and children sinking down.
   Spoken: Lord, have mercy.
   I couldn't see nobody home, and wasn't no one to be found.

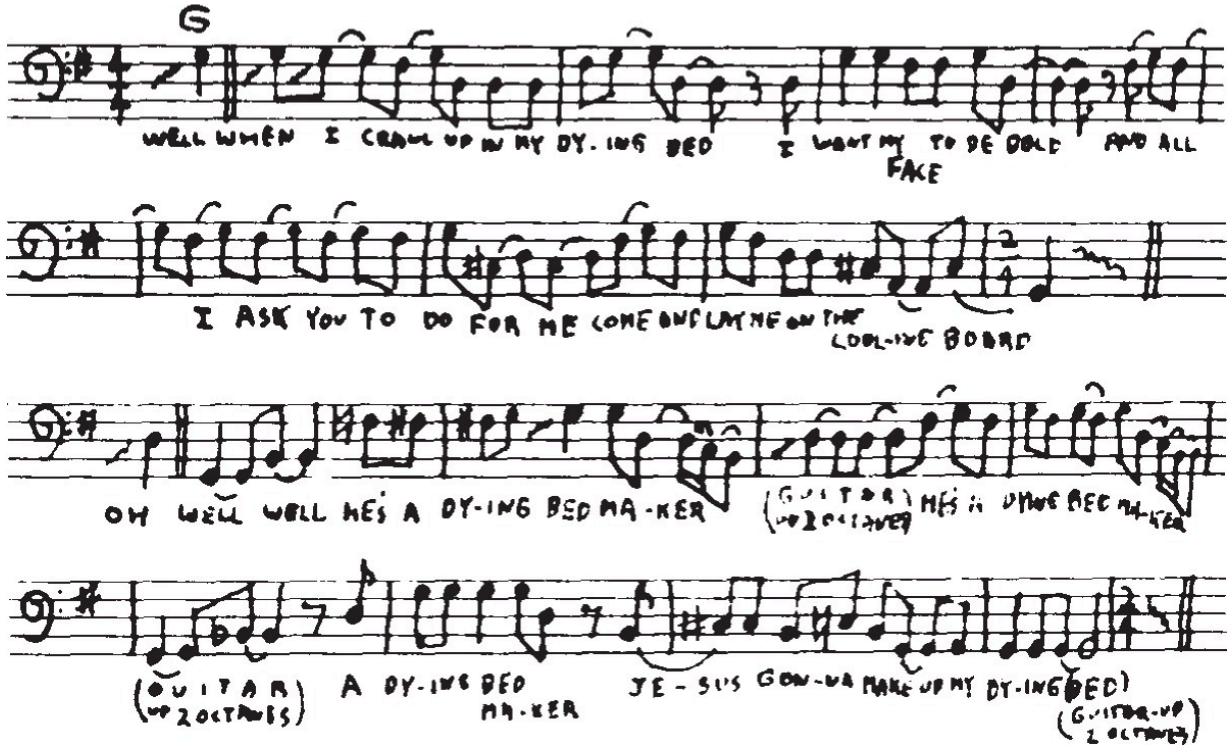
For additional songs about the 1927 flood of the Mississippi River or other floods, hear the following: Barbecue Bob, Co 14222-D, *Mississippi Heavy Water Blues*; Blind Lemon Jefferson, Pm 12487, *Rising High Water Blues*; George Carter, Pm 12750, *Rising River Blues*; Bessie Smith, Co 14195-D, *Back Water Blues*; Big Bill, ARC 7-04-68, *Southern Flood Blues*; Mattie Delaney, Vo 1480, *Tallahatchie River Blues*. This last song has the same tune contour as does Patton's song. For a sermon about the 1927 flood hear Moses Mason, Pm 12601, *Red Cross The Disciple of Christ Today*.

Ch. 1. Oh, well, well, He's a dying-bed maker.
He's a dying-bed maker.
a dying-bed maker.
Jesus gonna make up my dying (bed).

1. Jesus met a woman at the well, she went to running (home).
I saw a man standing at the well, told me everything I (done).'

Ch. 2. 'Well, well, He might be a prophet.
He might be a prophet.
He might be a prophet.
Jesus gonna make up my dying (bed).'

Ch. 3. 'Uh, le's go and meet him.
le's go and meet him.
le's go and meet him.
Jesus gonna make up my dying (bed).'


G
WELL WHEN I CRAWL UP IN MY DY. ING BED I WANT MY TO BE BOLD AND ALL
FACE
I ASK YOU TO DO FOR ME COME AND LAY ME ON THE
COOL-ING BOARD
OH WELL WELL HE'S A DY-ING BED MA-KER
(GUITAR)
A DY-ING BED
MA-KER
JE-SUS GON-NA MAKE UP MY DY-ING BED)

Well, when I crawl up in my dying-bed, I want my face to be bold.
And all I ask you to do for me, come and lay me on the cooling board.

Ch. 4. Well, gonna sit down on it.
gonna sit down on it.
gonna sit down on it.
Jesus gonna make up my dying (bed).

Ch. 5 Well, well, He's a hard teacher.
He's a hard teacher.
He's a hard teacher.
Jesus gonna make up my dying (bed).

2. Well, when I crawl up in my (dying-bed), passing by my gate.
And all I ask you to do for me, come and sit up at my wake.

Ch. 6. Well, I'm going to heaven.
I'm going to heaven.
I'm going to heaven.
Jesus gonna make up my dying (bed).

Ch. 7. Ah, well, well, I got religion.
I've got religion.
I've got religion.
Jesus gonna make up my dying (bed).

Ch. 8 . Ah, well, well, I'm on my journey.
I'm on my journey.
I'm on my journey.
Jesus gonna make up my dying (bed).

4. Well, when I crawl up in my dying-bed, I want my face to be bold.
And all I ask you to do for me, come and lay me on the cooling board.

Ch. 9. Well, gonna sit down on it.
gonna sit down on it.
gonna sit down on it.
Jesus gonna make up my dying (bed).

See *When I's Dead an' Gone*, in Odum and Johnson's *Negro Workaday Songs* (Chapel Hill, 1926), p. 197.

DISCOGRAPHY: Blind Willie Johnson, Co 14303-D, *Jesus Make Up My Dying Bed*; Jubilee Gospel Team, QRS R-7015, *Lower My Dying Head*; Joshua White, Banner 32859, Conqueror 8244, Melotone 12786, Oriole 8268, Perfect 0258, Romeo 5268, *Jesus Gonna Make Up My Dying Bed*.

L-62 ***I Shall Not Be Moved*** Pm 12986

1. I shall not, I shall not be moved. (2)
   Like a tree that's planted by the water.
   I shall not be moved.
2. On my way to glory, etc.
3. I shall not, etc.
4. Oh, turn back, etc.
5. Oh, brother, etc.
6. I'm on my way to heaven, etc.
7. Oh, Christians, etc.
8. I shall not, etc.
9. Oh, turn back, etc.
10. I shall not, etc.

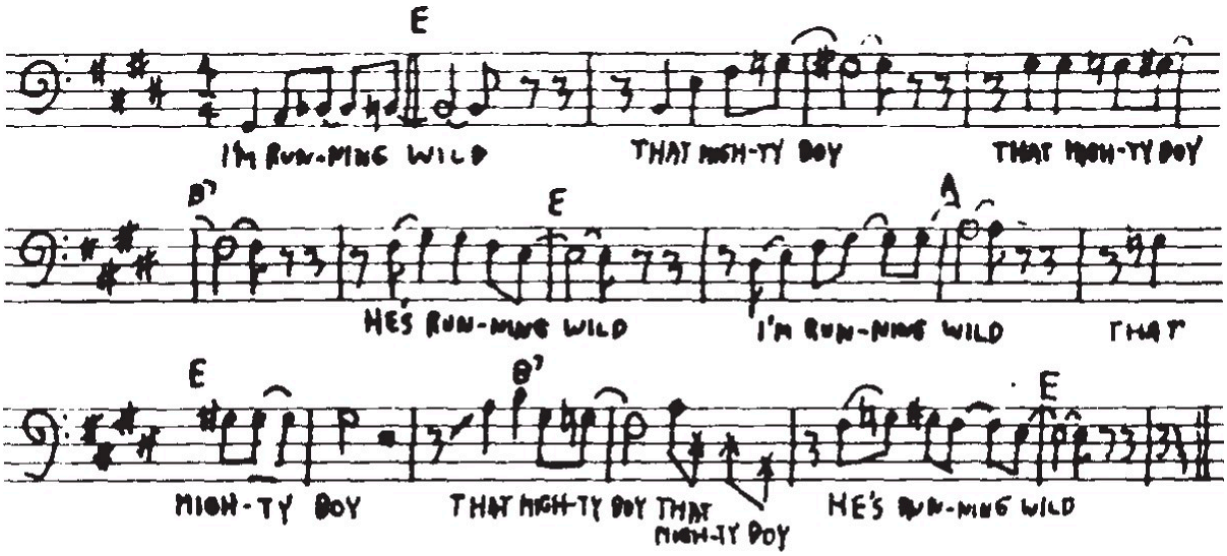
L-63 ***Rattlesnake Blues*** Pm 12924

1. Just like a rattlesnake, I said, Mama, Lordy, in the middle of his squirl.
   I say I'm just like a rattlesnake, Baby, in the middle of his squirl.
   I ain't gonna have no hard times, Mama, rolling through this world.
2. When I leave here, Mama, I'm going further down the road.
   I said when I leave here, Mama, I'm going further down the road.
   So if I meet him up there, I'm going back to the Gulf of Mexico.
3. I'm going to shake glad hands, Mama, I say, Lord, with your loving boy.
   I'm going to shake glad hands, I say, with your loving boy.
   Fixin' to eat my supper in, Shelby, Illinois.
4. Vicksburg on a high hill and Louisiana, Lord, it's just below.
   Vicksburg on a high hill, Mama, you know Louisiana's just below.
   If I get back there, I ain't gonna never be bad no more.
5. And my baby's got a heart like a piece of railroad steel.
   Baby got a heart like a piece of railroad steel.
   If I leave here this morning, never say, 'Daddy, how do you feel?'

Stanza five occurs as the first stanza of *Heart Like Railroad Steel*, Pm 12953.

L-64 ***Running Wild Blues*** Pm 1292

Ch. 1. I'm running wild, that mighty boy, that mighty boy, he's running wild.



Ch. 2. I'm running wild, that mighty boy, that mighty boy, mighty boy, he's running wild.

1. He's on my dreams, oh how I grieve, that mighty boy, he's running wild.

Ch. 3. I'm running wild, I'm running wild, that mighty boy, mighty boy, he's running wild.

2. He's on my dreams, he's on my dreams that mighty boy, he's running wild.

Ch. 3. He's running wild, that mighty boy, that mighty girl, that mighty girl, he's running wild.

Ch. 4. I'm running wild, I'm running wild, that mighty boy, mighty boy, he's running wild.

3. It's all night long, she's on my mind, that girl of mine, that girl of mine, she's on my mind.

Ch. 5. I'm running wild, that mighty boy, that mighty boy, mighty boy, he's running wild.

4. All night long, how you be gone, he's on my mind, that boy of mine.

Ch. 6. I'm running wild, that mighty boy, that mighty boy, that mighty boy, he's running wild.

5. He's all I need, it seems to me, that mighty girl, mighty girl, she's running wild.

Ch. 7. I'm running wild, that mighty girl, that mighty girl, that mighty girl, she's running wild.

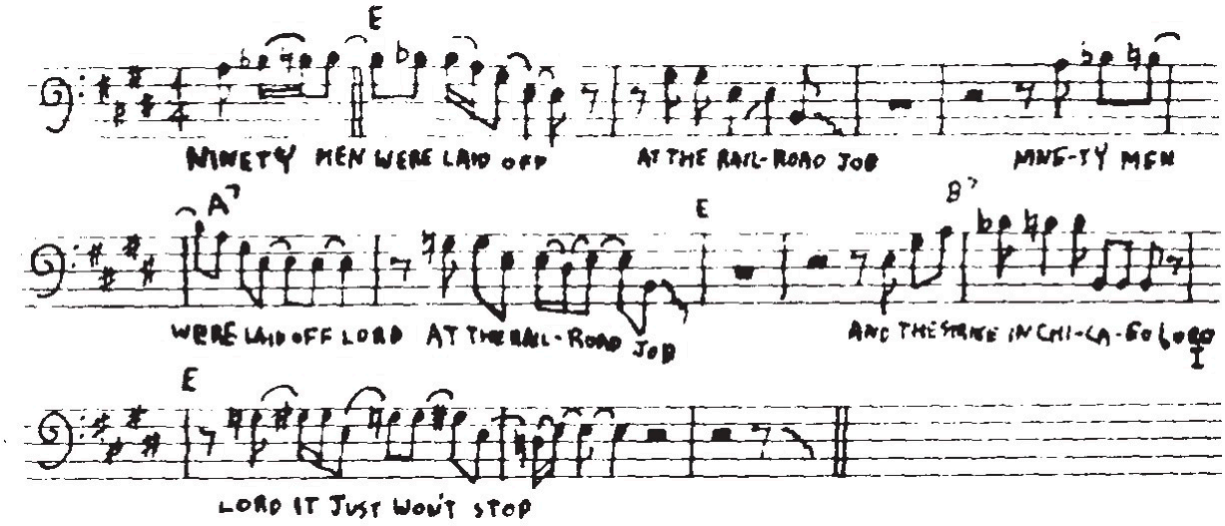
6. All night long (?) gone, that mighty boy, he's running wild.

Ch. 8. I'm running wild, that mighty boy, that mighty boy, that mighty boy, he's running wild.

7. It seems to me (?) that mighty girl, she's running wild.

L-77 ***Mean Black Moan*** Pm 12953

1. It's a mean black moan, and it's lying front of my door.
   When I leave Chicago, Lord, I ain't coming back no more.


E
NINETY MEN WERE LAID OFF AT THE RAIL-ROAD JOB MINE-TY MEN
A7
E
B7
WERE LAID OFF LORD AT THE RAIL-ROAD JOB AND THE STRIKE IN CHI-CA-GO LORD
E
LORD IT JUST WON'T STOP

2. Ninety men were laid off, at the railroad job.
   Ninety men were laid off, Lord, at the railroad job.
   And the strike in Chicago, Lordy, Lord, it just won't stop.

3. I'm tired of mean black moans, friends, lying front of my door.
   I'm tired of mean black moans, Baby, lying in front of my door.
   But when I leave Chicago, Lord, I ain't coming back here no more.

4. There are hungry men, Lordy, all around my bed.
   There are hungry men, Lordy, standing around my bed.
   I wish somebody might be able to kill the black moan dead.

5. Every morning, Lord, rent man is at my door.

Every morning, Baby, rent man is at my door.
'And my man hasn't worked, Lord, in two or three months or more'.

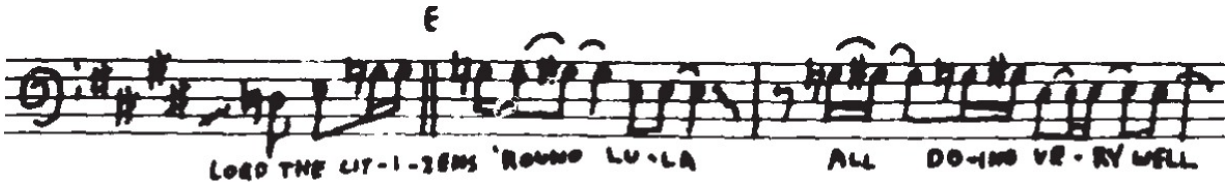
6. It's all I can do, Lord, ah, fight for my life.
All I can do, Lord, fight for my life.
But when the strike is over, I will be all right.

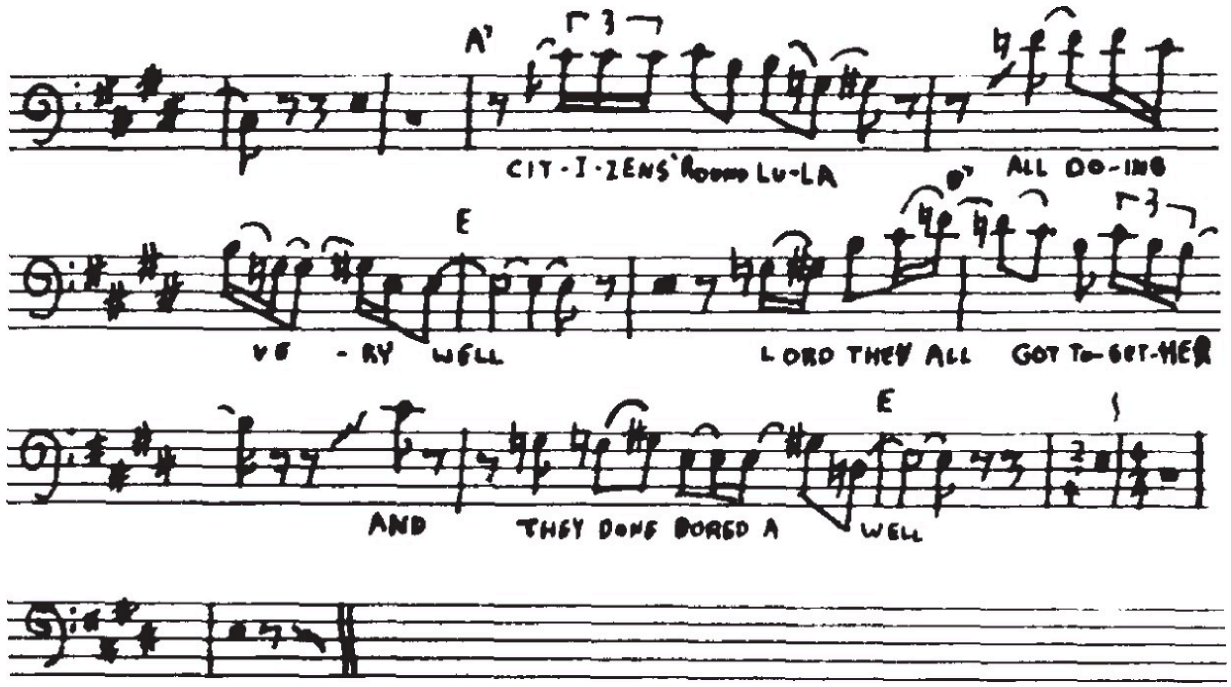
7. Ninety men were laid off, Lord, on the railroad job. (2)
The trouble in Chicago, Lord, it just won't stop.

L-429 ***Dry Well Blues*** Pm 13070

1. When I was living at Lula, I was living at ease. (2)
Lord, the drought come in cold autumn, parched up all the trees.

2. Oh, today over in Lula, we'll bid that town goodbye.
   Day, Lula, bidding you and the town goodbye.
   Well, when it come to another day, Lord, the Lula well was gone dry.





3. Lord the citizens 'round Lula, all doing very well.
   Citizens 'round Lula, all doing very well.
   Lord, they all got together, and they done bored a well.
4. I ain't got no money and I sure ain't got no home.
   Lord, I ain't got no money and I sure ain't got no home.
   The old weather done come in, parched all the cotton and corn.
5. Oh, look down the country, Lord, it'll make you cry.
   Look down country, Lord, it'll make you cry.
   Most everybody, Lord, had a watering-bayou.
6. Lord the Lula women, Lord, (?).
   Lula men, (?).
   Lord, you ought to been there, Lord, see the womens all leaving town.

L-432 ***Moon Going Down*** Pm 13014

1. Oh, the moon is going down, Baby, sun's about to shine. (2)
   Rosetta Henry told me, 'Lord, I don't want you hanging 'round.'
2. Oh, well, where were you now, Baby, Clarksdale mill burned down? (2)
   Spoken: Boy, you know where I was.
   I was way down Sunflower with my face all full of frowns.
3. There's a house over yonder painted all over green. (2)
   Spoken: Boy, you know I know it's over there.
   Some of the finest young women, Lord, a man most ever seen.
4. Lord, I think I heard that Helena whistle, Helena whistle, Helena whistle blow.

Lord, I think I heard that Helena whistle . . .
Lord, I ain't going to stop walking 'till I get in my rider's door.

5. Lord the smokestack is black and the bell it shine like, bell it shine like, bell it shine like gold.
Oh, the smokestack is black and the bell it shine like gold.
Spoken: Doesn't it, boy, you know, and it looks good to me.
Lord, I ain't going to walk here, Baby, 'round no more.

6. Ah, I even was at midnight, when I heard the loco blow.
I was out at night, when I heard the loco blow.
Spoken: Boy, I was getting lonesome . . . Blues in me.
I got to see my rider, where she's getting her dough.

L-433 ***Bird Nest Bound*** Pm 13070

1. Come on, Mama, out to the edge of town.
Come on, Mama, go to the edge of town.
I know where there's a bird nest, built down on the ground.

2. If I was a bird, Mama . . .
If I was a bird, Mama, I would find a nest in the heart of town.
Spoken: Lord, you know I'd build it in the heart of town.
So when the town get lonesome, I'd be bird nest bound.

3. Hard luck is at your front door, blues are in your room. (2)
Trouble is at your back door, what is going to become of you?

4. Sometimes I say I need you, then again I don't. (2)
Spoken: You know it's the truth, Baby.
Sometimes I think I'll quit you, then again I won't.

5. Oh, I remember one morning standing at my baby's door.
Spoken: Shucks, boy, I was standing there.
Oh, I remember one morning standing at my baby's door.
Spoken: Boy, you know what she told me?
Look-a-here, Papa Charley, I don't want you no more.

6. Take me home sweet home, Baby, to that shinin' star.
Take me home now, Baby, aw, that shinin' star.
Spoken: Lord, you know (?).
You don't need no telling, Mama, take you in my car.

14723 ***Jersey Bull Blues*** Vo 02782

1. If you got a good bull cow, you ought to feed your bull good at home. (2)
Spoken: Boy, feed him good at home.
There may come along a young heifer and just tow your bull from home.

2. Oh, my bull's in the pasture, Babe, Lord, where there's no grass.
And my bull's in the pasture, Lord, where there's no grass.
Spoken: Boy, ain't no grass in this pasture.
I swear every minute it seems, like it's gonna be my last.

3. And my bull's got a horn, long as my arm.

And my bull's got a horn, Baby, long as my arm.
Spoken: Boy, long as my arm.
Aw, bull got a horn long as my arm.

4. A five pound axe now, Babe, cut two different ways.
I throws a five pound axe, and I cut two different ways.
Spoken: Boy, I cut for the women both night and day.
And I cut for the women both night and day.

5. I throws a five pound axe, and I just dropped in your town. (2)
Spoken: Boy, I got weight enough behind me.
I got weight enough behind me to drive that old axe on down.

6. And I remember one morning 'tween midnight and day.
Spoken: Aw sho'.
And I remember one morning 'tween midnight and day.
I was way upstairs, throwing myself away.

14725 ***High Sheriff Blues*** Vo 02680

I. When the trial in Belzoni, it ain't no use to scream and cry.
When the trial was in Belzoni, it ain't no use to scream and cry.
Mr. Webb will take you, back to Belzoni jail a' flying.

2. Let me tell you folks just how he treated me . . . eeeee. (2)
And he put me in the cellar, it was dark as it could be.

3. It 'a late one evening, Mr. Purvis was standing 'round . . . mmmmmm.
Mr. Purvis told Mr. Webb to let poor Charley down.

4. It takes boozey booze, Lord, to carry me through . . . mmmmmm. (2)
Thirty days seem like years in a jailhouse where there is no booze.

5. I got up one morning feeling awful . . . mmmmmm.
I got up one morning feeling mighty bad . . . mmmmmm.
And it must have been them, Belzoni jail I had.
Spoken: Blues I had, boy.

6. All in trouble, ain't no use to scream and . . . mmmmmm.
When I was in prison, it ain't no use to scream and cry.
Mr. Purvis' on his mansion, he don't pay no mind.

14727 ***Stone Pony Blues*** Vo 02680

1. I got me a stone pony, and I don't ride shetland no more.
I got me a stone pony, don't ride shetland no more.
You can find my stone pony, hooked to my rider's door.

2. Vicksburg's my pony, Greenville's my grey mare.
Vicksburg's my pony, Greenville, Lord, is my grey mare.
You can find my stone pony down in Lula town somewhere.

3. And I got me a stone pony, don't ride shetland no more.
Got a stone pony, don't ride shetland no more.
And I can't feel welcome, rider, nowhere I go.

4. Vicksburg's on a high hill, and Natchez just below.
   Vicksburg on a high hill, Natchez just below.
   And I can't feel welcome, rider, nowhere I go.

5. Well, I didn't come here steal nobody's brown.
   Didn't come here steal nobody's brown.
   I just stopped by here, well, to keep you from stealing mine.

6. Hello, Central, sa' matter with your line?
   Hello, Central, matter, now with your line?
   Come a storm at night and tore the wire down.

14739 ***34 Blues*** Vo 02651

1. I ain't gonna tell nobody '34 have done for me.
   I ain't gonna tell nobody what '34 have done for me.
   Took my roll, Lordy, I was broke as I could be.

2. They run me from Will Dockery's (?).
   Spoken: Buddy, what's the matter?
   They run me from Will Dockery's (?).
   Ah, one of 'em told Papa Charley, 'I don't want you hangin' 'round on my job no more.'

3. Well, look down the country! It almost make you cry. (2)
   Spoken: My God, children.
   Women and children flagging freight trains for rides.

4. Carmen got a little six Buick, big six Chevrolet car.
   Carmen got a little six Buick, little six Chevrolet car.
   Spoken: My God, what solid power.
   And it don't do nothing but follow behind Holloway's farmer's plow.

5. And it may bring sorrow, Lord, and it may bring tears.
   It may bring sorrow, Lord, and it may bring tears.
   Oh, Lord, oh, Lord, let me see your brand new year.

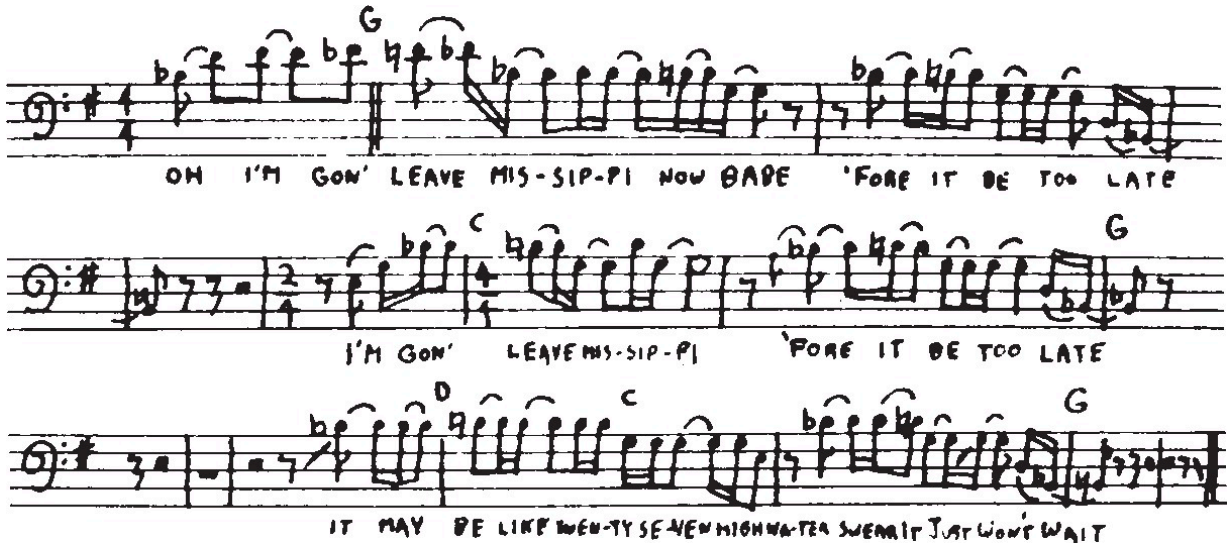
14746 ***Love My Stuff*** Vo 02782

1. Well, I love my stuff, Babe, I want to get it and how.
   I love my stuff, Babe, I want to get it and how.
   And my rider got some way of shimmying, swear it just won't stop.

2. Oh, I know she want it hot, Babe, sure don't want it cold.
   Spoken: Aw, shuck it, Mama.
   I know she want it hot, Babe, sure don't want it cold.
   Spoken: Aw, you know it breaks my heart.
   It would break my heart if you say, can't use me no more.

3. And I keep on telling my rider, well, 'Keep a' shimmying down.'
   Spoken: Baby, please keep shimmying down.
   I keep on telling my rider, 'Please keep a' shimmying down.'
   'Lord, that jelly you fix in your strut will make a monkey man leave this town.'

4. Oh the lights burning dim in, Charley's black camp again. (2)
   Spoken: Aw, sho'.
   It must be the devil, in the shack in bed again.


G
OH I'M GON' LEAVE MIS-SIP-PI NOW BABE 'FORE IT BE TOO LATE
C
G
I'M GON' LEAVE MIS-SIP-PI 'FORE IT BE TOO LATE
D
C
G
IT MAY BE LIKE TWEN-TY SE-VEN HIGH WA-TER SWEAR IT JUST WON'T WAIT

5. I'm going to leave Mississippi, now, Babe, 'fore it be too late. (2)
   Spoken: Boy, you know I got to leave Mississippi.
   It may be like twenty-seven high-water, swear it just won't wait

6. Oh, I once has a notion, Lord, I believe I will.
   Spoken: Aw, sho'.
   Aw, once had a notion, Lord, I believe I will.
   I'm going to move down the river and stop at Dago Hill.

6. 1, 2 and 3 occur on Pm 13090, *M And O Blues*, by Willie Brown.

14747 ***Revenue Man Blues*** Vo 02931

1. Aw, the revenue men is riding, Boy, you'd better look out.
   Spoken: Aw, sheriff ain't Purvis.
   Aw, the revenue men is riding, boy, you'd better look out.
   Spoken: Boy if he calls you, you dont stop, boy . . .
   If he halts, you don't stop, you will likely be knocked out.

2. Well, I don't love salt water, well, she always wants a drink.
   Spoken: Got to have a drink.
   I don't love salt water, she always wants a drink.
   Spoken: Boy, if they see you with a bottle, though . . .
   If they see you with a bottle, they will almost break your neck.

3. Aw, take me home to, Lord, that shinin' star.
   Spoken: Aw, sho'.
   I said, take me home to that shinin' star.
   Spoken: She don't need no telling, daddy, aw, sho'.
   She don't need no telling, daddy will take you in his car.

4. Aw, come on, Mama, let us go to the edge of town.
Spoken: Aw, sho'.
Come on, Mama, let us go to the edge of town.
Spoken: Baby, I know where there's a bird nest built at . . .
I know where there's a bird nest built down on the ground.

5. Aw, I wake up every morning now with the jinx all around my bed.
Spoken: Aw sho'.
I wake up every morning with the jinx all around my bed.
Spoken: You know I heard them jinx howling.
I have been a good provider, but I believe I've been misled.

14749 ***Oh Death*** Vo 02904

1. Just look, just look, just look, see what the Lord done done.
Just look, just look, just look what the Lord done done.
Just look, well, Lordy, just look, just look what the Lord done done.
Lord, I know, Lord, I know my time ain't long.

2. It was soon one morning, oh, Lordy, when death come in the room. (3)
   Lord, I know, etc.
3. Oh, hush, oh, hush, oh, hush, oh, hush, somebody's calling me. (3)
   Lord, I know, etc.
4. It was soon one morning, oh, Lordy, when death come in the room. (3)
5. Oh, death, oh, death, oh, death, oh, death, done stole my mother and gone.
   Lord, I know, etc.

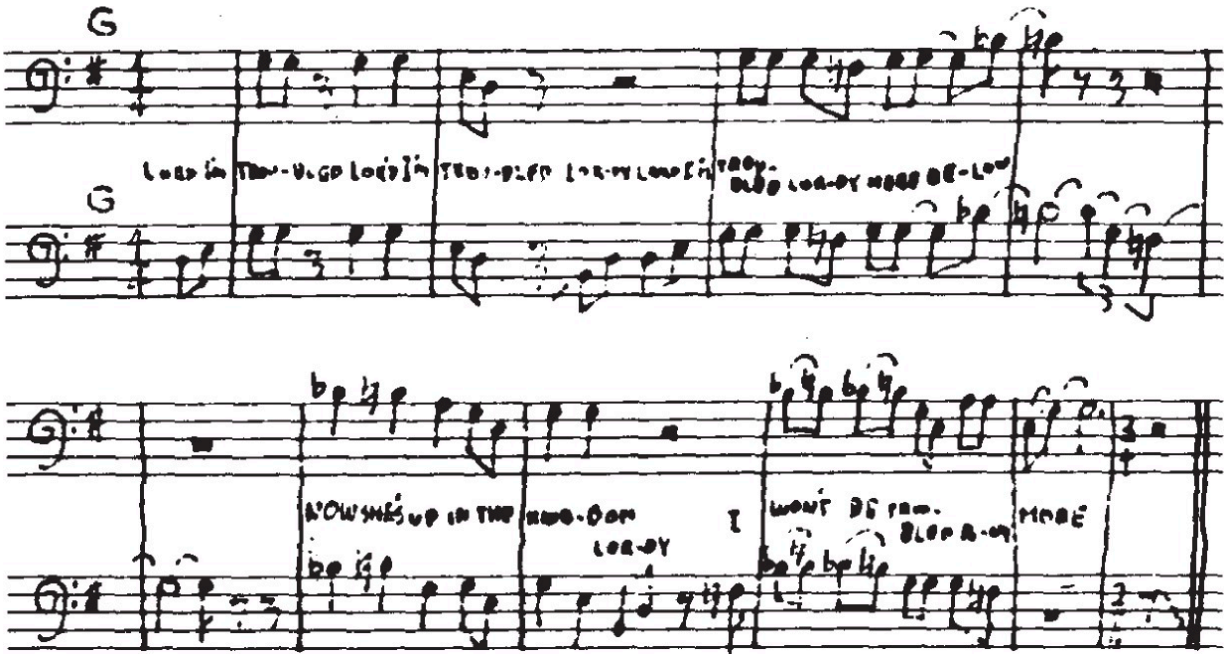
6. Oh, move my pillow, then turn my bed around. (3)
   Lord, I know, etc.

7. Oh, hush, oh, hush, oh, hush, oh, hush, somebody's calling me. (3)

14752 ***Troubled 'Bout My Mother*** Vo 02904

1. I wonder where's my mother, Lordy, and I wonder, Lordy, where she's gone.
   Now she's up in the Kingdom, Lordy, shouting 'round the throne.

2. Lord, I'm troubled, Lord, I'm troubled, Lordy, Lord, I'm troubled, Lordy, here below.
   When I gets up in the Kingdom, Lordy, I won't be troubled any more.



3. Lord, I wonder where's my father, Lordy, Lord, I wonder, Lordy, where he's gone.
   Now he's up in the Kingdom, Lordy, shouting 'round the throne.

4. Oh, Daniel he was troubled, Lordy, Lord, he prayed three times a day.
   (?).

5. Lord, I'm troubled, Lord, I'm troubled, Lordy, Lord, I'm troubled, Lordy here below.
   When I gets up in the Kingdom, Lordy, I won't be troubled any more.

6. Oh, David he was troubled, Lordy, Lord, out on the battlefield.
   Since David killed Goliath, throw 'way my sword and shield.

7. Lord, I'm troubled, Lord, I'm troubled, Lordy, Lord I'm troubled, Lordy, here below.
   When I gets up in the Kingdom, Lordy, I won't be troubled any more.

8. I wonder where's my mother, Lordy, and I wonder, Lordy, where she's gone.
   Now she's up in the Kingdom, Lordy, shouting 'round the throne.

9. Lord, I'm troubled, Lord, I'm troubled, Lordy, Lord, I'm troubled, Lordy here below.
   When I gets up in the Kingdom, Lordy, I won't be troubled any more.

10. Well, I wonder where's my sister, Lordy, and I wonder where she's gone.
Now she's up in the Kingdom, Lordy, shouting 'round the throne.

11. Lord, I wonder where's my mother, Lordy, I wonder, Lordy, where she's gone.
Now she's up in the Kingdom, Lordy, she won't be troubled any more.

DISCOGRAPHY: Entire song: Frank Palmes, Pm 12893, *Troubled 'Bout My Soul*.

14757 ***Poor Me*** Vo 02651

1. Yes on me, it's poor me.
You must have pity on poor me.
I ain't got nobody, take pity on poor me.

Ch. 1. You may go, you may stay
But she'll come back, some sweet day.
Bye and bye, sweet Mama, bye and bye.

2. Don't the moon look pretty,
Shinin' down through the tree?
I can see Bertha Lee,
Lord, but she can't see me.

Ch. 2. You may go, you may stay.
But she'll come back, some sweet day.
Bye and bye, sweet Mama, Baby, won't you, bye and bye.

Ch. 3. You may go, you may stay.
But she'll come back, some sweet day.
Bye and bye, sweet Mama, bye and bye.

3. Yes on me, it's poor me.
You must have pity on poor me.
I ain't got nobody, take pity on poor me.

4. Don't the moon look pretty,
Shinin' down through the tree?
I can see Bertha Lee,
But she can't see me.

Ch. 4. You may go, you may stay.

But she'll come back, some sweet day.
Bye and bye, sweet Mama, Baby, won't you, bye and bye.

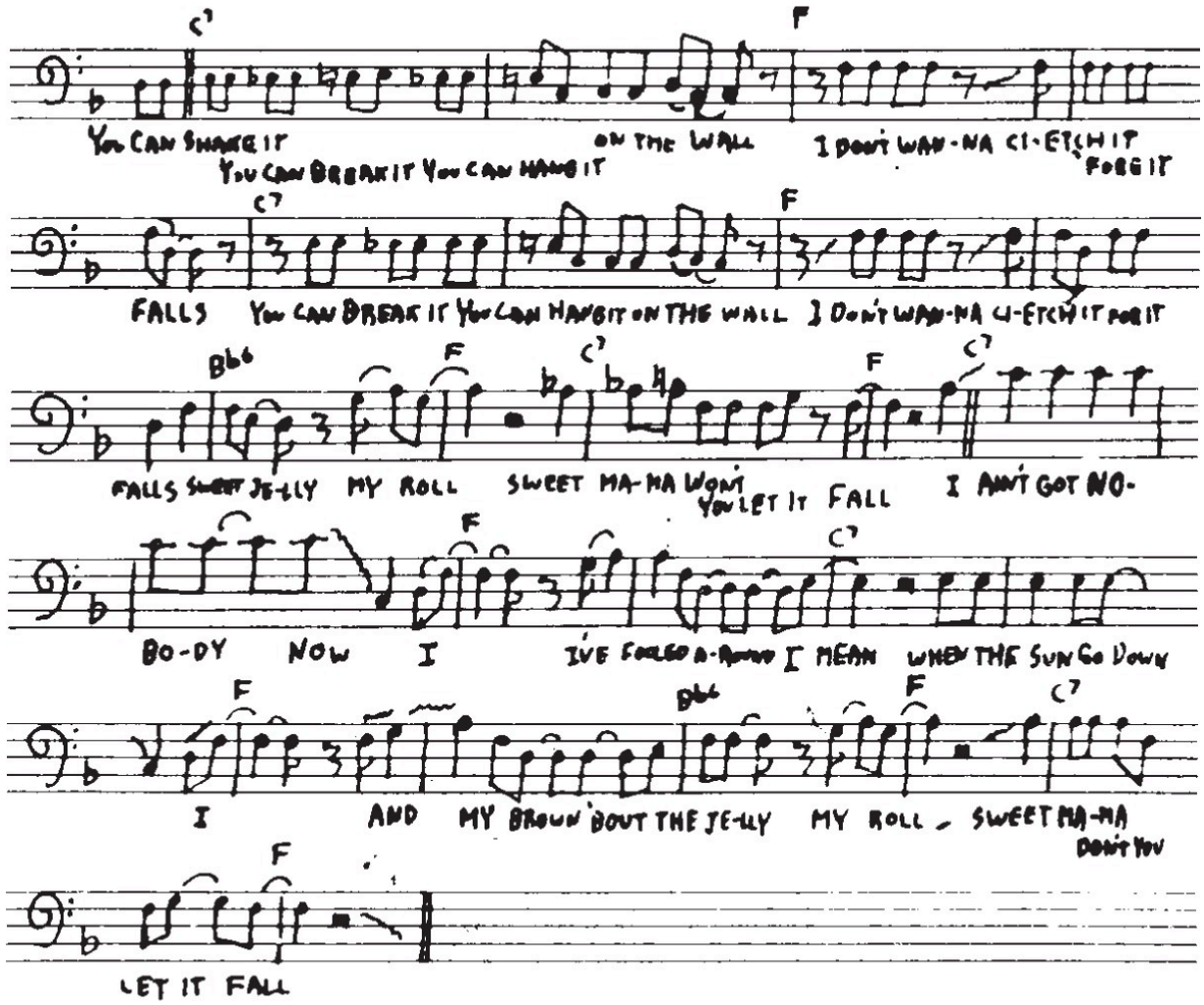
14758 ***Hang It On The Wall*** Vo 02931

Ch. I. You can shake it, you can break it, you can hang it on the wall.
Throw it out the winder, catch it 'fore it falls.
You can break it, you can hang it on the wall.
I don't wanna' catch it 'fore it falls.
Sweet jelly, my roll, sweet Mama, don't you let it fall.

1. I ain't got nobody now. I've fooled around.
I mean, when the sun go down, I and my brown.
'Bout the jelly, my roll, sweet Mama, don't you let it fall.

Ch. 2. Just snatch it, you can grab it, you can break it, you can twist it.
Any way that a fellow can get it.
'Till I had my right mind.
I staying blue all the time.
'Bout the jelly, my roll, please, Mama, don't you let it fall.

Ch. 1. You can shake it, you can break it, you can hang it on the wall.
I don't wanna' catch it 'fore it falls.
You can break it, you can hang it on the wall.
I don't wanna' catch it 'fore it falls.
Sweet jelly, my roll, sweet Mama, don't you let it fall.


C7
F
You Can Shake It
You Can Break It You Can Hang It
on the Wall
I Don't Wan-na Ci-etch It
Fore It
FALLS
You Can Break It You Can Hang It on the Wall
I Don't Wan-na Ci-etch It Fore It
Bb6
FALLS Sweet Je-lly My Roll
Sweet Ma-ma Won't You Let It Fall
I Ain't Got No-
Bo-dy Now I
I've Called A-Round I Mean When the Sun Go Down
I
And My Brown 'Bout the Je-lly My Roll
Sweet Ma-ma
Don't You
Let It Fall

Spoken: Looky here, baby, it's getting good to me now, that stuff you're shaking.

2. Ah, ah, me and my brown, ah, when the sun go down.
'Bout your jelly, my roll, please mama, don't you let it fall.

Ch. 2. Just snatch it, you can grab it, you can break it, you can twist it.
Any way that a fellow can get it.
'Till I had my right mind.
I staying blue all the time.
'Bout the jelly, my roll, please, Mama, don't you let it fall.

Ch. 1. You can shake it, you can break it, you can hang it on the wall.
I don't wanna' catch it 'fore it falls.
You can break it, you can hang it on the wall.
I don't wanna' catch it 'fore it falls.
Sweet jelly, my roll, sweet Mama, don't you let it fall.

3. Everybody got a jelly roll like mine. It's good and round,
I mean, when the sun go down.
Ah, I and my brown.

’Bout the jelly, my roll, please, Mama, don’’t you let it fall.

Ch. 1. You can shake it, you can break it, you can hang it on the wall.
I don’t wanna’ catch it ’fore it falls.
You can break it, you can hang it on the wall.
I don’t wanna’ catch it ’fore it falls.
Sweet jelly, my roll, sweet Mama, don’t you let it fall.

4. Everybody have a jelly roll like mine. I live in town.
I mean, since the sun went down.
An, I and my brown.
’Bout the jelly, my roll, sweet Mama, don’t let it fall.

Ch. I. You can shake it, you can break it, you can hang it on the wall.
I don’t wanna’ catch it ’fore it falls.
You can break it, you can hang it on the wall.
I don’t wanna’ catch it ’fore it falls.
Sweet jelly, my roll, sweet Mama, don’t you let it fall.

5. Sure, everybody . . .
Spoken: Ah, sure, Baby, getting good to Charley.
Ah, I can’t tell when.
Ah, back to town again.
’Bout the jelly, my roll, sweet Mama, don’t you let it fall.

[Since this study was written one of the missing Paramount records has been discovered (by John Fahey himself): *Circle Round The Moon* and *Devil Sent The Rain Blues*. Time did not permit an analysis of these two songs, but we append here transcriptions of the lyrics, with a few notes.]

L-39 ***Circle Round The Moon*** Pm 13040

1. Throw your arms around me like a circle round the moon. (2)
Some black cow skinner better come and get me soon.

2. Out on the road, serving out my time. (2)
And the Delta womens was tryin’ to run me down.

3. How long, great God, how long?
How long, how long, great God, how long?
Shall I be here rollin’ when your man is gone?

4. I’m goin’ away, make it lonesome here. (2)
I’m goin’ away, babe, to make it lonesome here.

5. Get up this mornin’, blues all round my bed. (2)
I read a letter that my Georgia (?) was dead.

6. Eagle been here, started a nest and gone. (2)
And you know by that I ain’t gonna be here long.

7. Throw your arms round me like a circle round the moon. (3)

DISCOGRAPHY: I.I: Memphis Jug Band, Vi V-38504, *Stealin’ Stealin’* (using ‘sun’ instead of ‘moon’). Stanza 4 also appears in *Green River Blues* (Pm 12972).

L-40 ***Devil Sent The Rain Blues*** Pm 13040

1. Good Lord send the sunshine, devil he send the rain. (2)
   I will be there tomorrow on the mornin' train.

2. You don't know, sure don't know my mind.
   You don't know, baby, sure don't know my mind.
   I don't show you my ticket and you don't know where I'm going.

3. Followed sweet mama to the buryin' playground. (2)
   I didn't know that I loved her till they laid her down.

4. I been to the ocean, peeped down the deep blue sea.
   Been to the ocean, peeped down in the blue sea.
   I didn't see nobody, looked like my sweet mama to me.

5. One of these mornin's, you know it won't be long.
   One of these mornin's, baby, Lord, it won't be long.
   You gonna be mistreated and I'll have to leave you home.

6. I'm goin' away, mama, don't you want to go?
   I'm goin' away, mama, don't you want to . . . (2)

DISCOGRAPHY: 2.I and 2: Virginia Liston, OK 8115 *You Don't Know My Mind Blues*.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

A DISCOGRAPHY OF CHARLEY PATTON, HENRY SIMS, BERTHA LEE, WILLIE BROWN, LOUISE JOHNSON, AND WALTER (BUDDY BOY) HAWKINS.

CHARLEY PATTON: vocal, accompanied by own guitar

Richmond, Indiana. June 14, 1929

15211	*Mississippi Bo Weavil Blues*	Pm 12805[1]

WALTER HAWKINS: vocal, accompanied by own guitar

Richmond, Indiana. June 14, 1929

15212	*A Rag Blues*	Pm 12814
15213	*How Come Mama Blues (Deeble Bum Blues)*	Pm 12802

CHARLEY PATTON: vocal, accompanied by own guitar

Richmond, Indiana. June 14, 1929

15214	*Screamin' And Hollerin' The Blues*	Pm 12805[1]
15215	*Down The Dirt Road Blues (Over The Sea Blues)*[2]	Pm 12854
15216	*Pony Blues*	Pm 12792
15217	*Banty Rooster Blues*	Pm 12792

WALTER HAWKINS: vocal, accompanied by own guitar

Richmond, Indiana. June 14, 1929

15218	*Snatch It And Grab It*[3]	Pm 12814
15219	*Voice Throwin' Blues*	Pm 12802

CHARLEY PATTON: vocal, accompanied by own guitar

Richmond, Indiana. June 14, 1929

15220	*It Won't Be Long*	Pm 12854
15221-A	*Pea Vine Blues*	Pm 12877
15222-A	*Tom Rushen Blues*	Pm 12877

15223	*A Spoonful Blues*	Pm 12869
15224	*Shake It and Break It But Don't Let It Fall Mama*	Pm 12869
15225	*Prayer of Death - Part 1*	Pm 12799[1]
15225-A	*Prayer of Death - Part 2*	Pm 12799[1]
15226	*Lord I'm Discouraged*	Pm 12883, Her 92036[5]
15227	*I'm Going Home*	Pm 12883, Her 92036[5]

CHARLEY PATTON: vocal, accompanied by own guitar, with Henry Sims, violin*

Grafton, Wisconsin. c. late November, 1929

L-37-1	*Going To Move To Alabama**[6]	Pm 13014
L-38-1	*Elder Greene Blues**	Pm 12972
L-39-1	*Circle Round The Moon**	Pm 13040
L-40-1	*Devil Sent The Rain Blues**	Pm 13040
L-41-1	*Mean Black Cat Blues*	Pm 12943
L-42-1	*Frankie and Albert*	Pm 13110
L-43-2	*Some These Days I'll Be Gone*	Pm 13110
L-44-3	*Green River Blues*	Pm 12972

HENRY SIMS: vocal, accompanied by own violin, with Charley Patton,guitar

Grafton, Wisconsin. c. late November, 1929

L-45-1	*Farrell Blues*	Pm 12912
L-46-2	*Come Back Corrina*	Pm 12912

CHARLEY PATTON: vocal, accompanied by own guitar

Grafton, Wisconsin. c. late November, 1929

L-47-2	*Hammer Blues*[7]	Pm 12998
L-48-1	*Magnolia Blues*[8]	Pm 12943
L-49-1	*When Your Way Gets Dark*	Pm 12998
L-50-1	*Heart Like Railroad Steel*	Pm 12953
L-51-1	*Some Happy Day*	Pm 13031
L-52-1	*You're Gonna Need Somebody When You Die*	Pm 13031

L-53 to L-56 are untraced.

CHARLEY PATTON: vocal, accompanied by own guitar, with Henry Sims, violin*

Grafton, Wisconsin. c. late November, 1929

L-57-2	*Jim Lee Blues* – Part 1[9]	Pm 13080

L-58-	unknown, possibly *Jim Lee Blues – Part 2*	Pm 13133
L-59-1	*High Water Everywhere – Part 1*[10]	Pm 12909
L-60-2	*High Water Everywhere – Part 2*[10]	Pm 12909
L-61-1	*Jesue Is A Dying-Bed Maker* [sic]	Pm 12986
L-62-1	*I Shall Not Be Moved*	Pm 12986
L-63-2	*Rattlesnake Blues**	Pm 12924
L-64-1	*Running Wild Blues**	Pm 12924

HENRY SIMS: vocal, accompanied by own violin, with Charley Patton, guitar

Grafton, Wisconsin. c. earlyDecember, 1929

L-65-1	*Tell Me Man Blues*	Pm 12940
L-66-2	*Be True Be True Blues*	Pm 12940

L-67, L-68 and L-76 are untraced; L-69 to L-75 are by Edith North Johnson.

CHARLEY PATTON: vocal, accompanied by own guitar, with Henry Sims, violin*

Grafton, Wisconsin. c. earlyDecember, 1929

L-77-1	*Mean Black Moan**	Pm 12953
	Jim Lee Blues – Part 2[11]	Pm 13133
	Joe Kirby[12]	Pm 13133

LOUISE JOHNSON: vocal, accompanied by own piano, with vocal interjections by Charley Patton, Son House and Willie Brown*

Grafton, Wisconsin. May 28, 1930

L-398-1	*All Night Long Blues**	Pm 12992
L-399-2	*Long Ways From Home**	Pm 12992
L-419-1	*On The Wall*	Pm 13008
L-420-2	*By The Moon And Stars**	Pm 13008

L-400 to L-418 and L-421 to L-428 are untraced.

CHARLEY PATTON: vocal, accompanied by own guitar, with Willie Brown, second guitar*

Grafton, Wisconsin. May 28, 1930

L-429-2	*Dry Well Blues**	Pm 13070
L-430-	unknown	
L-431-1	*Some Summer Day – Part 1*[13]	Pm 13080
L-432-1	*Moon Going Down**	Pm 13014

L-433-1	*Bird Nest Bound**	Pm 13070

CHARLEY PATTON: vocal, accompanied by own guitar, with Bertha Lee, AND LEE) vocal* (these performances credit to PATTON

New York City,January 30, 1934

14723-	*Jersey Bull Blues*	Vo 02782
14724-	*Charley Bradley's Ten Sixty-Six Blues*[14]	Vo unissued
14725-2	*High Sheriff Blues*	Vo 02680
14726-	*Southern Whistle Blues**	Vo unissued
14727-1	*Stone Pony Blues*	Vo 02680
14728-	*My Man Blues**	Vo unissued

BERTHA LEE: vocal, accompanied by Charley Patton, guitar/speech*

New York City,January 31, 1934

14735-2	*Yellow Bee**	Vo 02650
14736-1	*Mind Reader Blues*	Vo 02650

CHARLEY PATTON: vocal, accompanied by own guitar, with Bertha Lee, vocal* (these performances credited to PATTON AND LEE)

New York City,January 31, 1934

14737-	*You're Gonna Miss Me, Honey**	Vo unissued
14738-	*Stoop Down*	Vo unissued
14739-1	*34 Blues*	Vo 02651
14740-	*I've Got A Mother Up In Kingdom**	Vo unissued
14741-	*Ananaias**	Vo unissued
14742-	*Listen What She Said**	Vo unissued
14743-	*Till The Day Is Done**	Vo unissued
14744-	*Black Cow Blues*	Vo unissued

BERTHA LEE: vocal, accompanied by Charley Patton, guitar

New York City,January 31, 1934

14745-	*Dog Train Blues*	Vo unissued

CHARLEY PATTON: vocal, accompanied by own guitar, with Bertha Lee, vocal* (these performances credited to PATTON AND LEE)

New York City,January 31, 1934

14746-	*Love My Stuff*	Vo 02782
14747-	*Revenue Man Blues*	Vo 02931
14748-	*Oh Lord I'm In Your Hands**	Vo unissued

New York City, February 1, 1934

14749-	*Oh Death**	Vo 02904
14752-	*Troubled 'Bout My Mother*	Vo 02904
14753-	*God's Word Will Never Pass Away**	Vo unissued
14754-	*Bed Bugs and Snakes*	Vo unissued
14755-	*The Delta Murder*	Vo unissued
14756-	*Whiskey Distillery**	Vo unissued
14757-1	*Poor Me*	Vo 02651
14758-	*Hang It On The Wall*	Vo 02931
14759-	*Move Your Trunk*	Vo unissued

14750/1 are by a commercial dance orchestra, recorded on the same day.

NOTES

1 Most copies of this record were credited to THE MASKED MARVEL.

2 The title in parentheses (*Over The Sea Blues*) does not appear on the record label, but was the original name given to the piece in the Gennett ledgers. The song does include the lines 'Some people tell me, overseas blues ain't bad' and 'Some people say them overseas blues ain't bad'.

3 There are two voices on this side; the second is probably Patton's.

4 All copies of this record were credited to ELDER J. J. HADLEY.

5 This Herwin issue was credited to CHARLEY PETERS. Paramount leased many of its masters to the Herwin Company of St. Louis, Missouri. The Herwin issues usually employed pseudonyms for the Paramount artists.

6 In the lead-in grooves of this side there is some very quiet, almost indecipherable speech, probably by Patton, saying something like 'Move to Alabama, take one'.

7 This side is mistitled, and should read *Hammock Blues*, since Patton sings about a hammock and not a hammer.

8 Only one copy of Paramount 12943 has been discovered, and this side, *Magnolia Blues*, is almost completely inaudible, owing to a two-inch absence of grooves through the entire side of the disc. But enough music and text is audible to indicate that the song is virtually the same, musically and textually, as L-49-1, *When Your Way Gets Dark. Magnolia Blues*, then, may be another take of L-49-1, or even L-49-1 itself with a different master number assigned.

9 No copy of this record belongs to any collection of which I am aware. Dixon and Godrich state that it has singing by both Patton and Sims. This information was probably obtained from the Paramount ledgers. It is most curious that parts 1 and 2 of this song were not issued back to back.

10 Despite Dixon and Godrich, there is only one guitar present on this record, not two.

11 See note on matrix L-58.

12 No copy of this record exists in any collection of which I am aware. But we do know who Joe Kirby was; the following is a portion of an interview held between Son House and Barry Hansen, Mark Levine and myself, at Venice, California, on May 7, 1965. A tape-recording of this interview is on deposit at the John Edwards Memorial Foundation, UCLA.

Fahey: Who is Joe Kirby?

House: That was a white fellow owned a plantation on up above... where I lived on [Highway] 61 right off on Claxton, Mississippi. Me, Charley and Willie and all, that

was our old stomping ground. That's where we used to drink so much of that corn whiskey made in coffee pots and everything. That's where I got Louise at, Louise Johnson. She lived over at that place, and that's why she got to go with me and Charley then to Grafton to make a record playing piano.

Fahey: How come Charley Patton made a song about Joe Kirby? Because that's where we
House: played all the time, and they could get the most corn liquor; they made more on Joe Kirby's than they did on any other place.

Fahey: Do you remember that song? No, a lot of them songs that Charley made I forgotten
House: now, because I forgotten a lot of my own.

13 No copy of this record exists in any collection of which I am aware. The information probably comes from the Paramount ledgers.

14 According to Son House, 'Charley Bradley, he was a white fellow, an engineer, and the engine number was 1066. [He drove] a train that come out of Memphis going down to Vicksburg late in the evening, and it would be round about 6:30 or 7:00. Everybody liked the way he blowed his whistle, and then they started talking about Charley Bradley and the 1066:

> We'd better get there and get there quick,
> So we catch Charley Bradley on the 1066.'

These verses may be part of Patton's unissued 14724. (House's recollection comes from the interview described in Note 12.)

THE ORDER OF ISSUE OF CHARLEY PATTON'S RECORDS

Pm 12792	*Pony Blues / Banty Rooster Blues*
Pm 12799	*Prayer of Death – Part 1 / Prayer of Death – Part 2*
Pm 12805	*Mississippi Bo Weavil Blues / Screamin' and Hollerin' The Blues*
Pm 12854	*Down The Dirt Road Blues / It Won't Be Long*
Pm 12869	*A Spoonful Blues / Shake It and Break It But Don't Let It Fall Mama*
Pm 12877	*Pea Vine Blues / Tom Rushen Blues*
Pm 12883	*Lord I'm Discouraged / I'm Going Home*
Pm 12909	*High Water Everywhere – Part 1 / High Water Everywhere – Part 2*
Pm 12924	*Rattlesnake Blues / Running Wild Blues*
Pm 12943	*Magnolia Blues / Mean Black Cat Blues*
Pm 12953	*Mean Black Moan / Heart Like Railroad Steel*
Pm 12972	*Green River Blues / Elder Greene Blues*
Pm 12986	*Jesue Is A Dying-Bed Maker / I Shall Not Be Moved*
Pm 12988	*Hammer Blues / When Your Way Gets Dark*
Pm 13014	*Moon Going Down / Going To Move To Alabama*
Pm 13031	*Some Happy Day / You're Gonna Need Somebody When You Die*
Pm 13040	*Circle Round The Moon / Devil Sent The Rain Blues*
Pm 13070	*Dry Well Blues / Bird Nest Bound*
Pm 13080	*Some Summer Day – Part 1 / Jim Lee Blues – Part 1*

Pm 13110 *Frankie And Albert / Some These Days I'll Be Gone*

Pm 13133 *Joe Kirby / Jim Lee Blues − Part 2*

Paramount 12792 sold well, 12799 poorly, 12805 and 12854 well. 12869 sold poorly, but 12877 did quite well, as did 12883 and 12909. Records with issue numbers higher than 12909 sold quite poorly.

The records which have been canvassed from black homes have all turned up in rural areas. This is in marked distinction to Blind Lemon Jefferson's records, which are found in cities as well.

Patton's Vocalion records sold poorly.

Vo 02651 *34 Blues / Poor Me*

Vo 02680 *High Sheriff Blues / Stone Pony Blues*

Vo 02782 *Love My Stuff / Jersey Bull Blues*

Vo 02904 *Oh Death / Troubled 'Bout My Mother*

Vo 02931 *Hang It On The Wall / Revenue Man Blues*

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